

XERXES,

A

*Collected
or
Perfected.
1790.*

TRAGEDY,

As it is ACTED at the NEW THEATRE
in Little Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

First Edition.

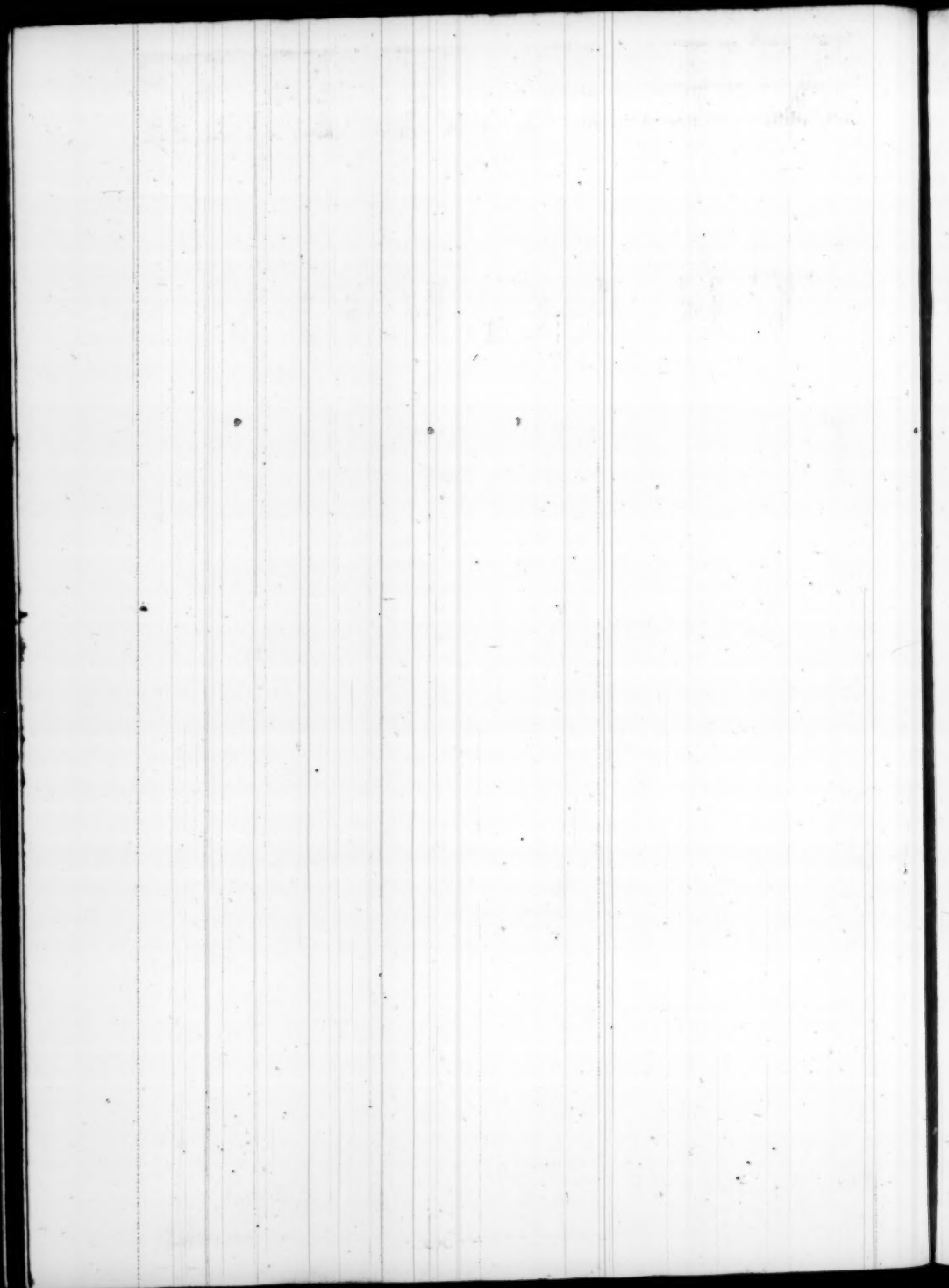
Written by C. CIBBER.

Quot Homines, Tot Sententia.



L O N D O N,

Printed, and are to be Sold by John Natt, near Stationers-Hall. 1699.



~~Your Closet) that it might now and then, owe~~

~~you in Mind of the Author: Besides, I owe~~

~~you many my Brother, and with I had a more effectual way of returning~~

~~to my Worthy Friend~~

~~AMUSELADAMS~~

~~Present in part of Payment: though I am apt to be- lieve, should I be ever saying, I shall never be one~~

~~of your Part: for of your Fiction, this I will~~

~~WOLVERTON Gent.~~

~~I can't tell why an Old Friend and Kinsman, should~~

~~not give a Man as good a Title to a Dedication, as~~

~~a fine Coat, and a great Perriwig; Two Qualities, that~~

~~of late, are thought as strictly Requisite in a Fashion-~~

~~able Patron, as a Clap, and a Duel, to the compleating~~

~~a Gentleman.~~

~~And indeed, it's no wonder that our late Plays are so~~

~~Barren, since we generally see our Authors reserve their~~

~~Gall and Satyr, for their Dedications, where they seem~~

~~to smile in the Patron's Face; and are civilly calling him~~

~~Coxcomb, by a long Repetition of those Virtues, which~~

~~Half the Town is heartily convinc'd, he is not the least~~

~~Tainted with; And thus, (as Apelles displeas'd with his~~

~~Painting an Horse's Foam, gave it the most height-~~

~~ning Touch, by throwing his Pensil at it in a Fury)~~

~~these Gentlemen that are so very tame, and civil in their~~

~~Satyr, are most Satyrical in their Panegyricks, and~~

~~never so compleatly show a Fop, as when they are~~

~~hardest at work upon the fine Gentleman.~~

~~Now, my end in sending you this Play with your~~

~~Name to't, was purely to let you see, that I still~~

~~take a Pleasure in thinking of you, though at this~~

~~Distance; and (if you find it worth a Room in~~

~~your~~

The Epistle Dedicatory.

your Closet) that it might now and then, put you in Mind of the Author: Besides, I owe you many Thanks for your Care of my Brother, and wish I had a more effectual way of returning them: in the mean time, be pleas'd to take this Present in part of Payment; though I am apt to believe, should I be ever Paying, I shall never be out of your Debt; for even your protection of this Trifle is running on fresh Score: For, whatever Fortune Xerxes may have found in Town, I knew your Name would be the surest means to give him a Favourable Reception in the Country; and though the Ladies thereabouts should think it but a dull Afternoons Entertainment in it Self; yet, if you happen to be by at the Reading, it will at least be diverting in the Consequence: For even Poetry can't make you ill Company: They'll want no Musick between the Acts, having the Relief of your Conversation; and they must certainly be deeply in Love with something out of their reach, if that can't put 'em in Tune: For what Company, though never so dull'd, does not feel a new Life when you come into it, or is not Dead when you leave it? What Child, what Man, or (what's no little Wonder) what Woman is not pleas'd with you, which they are seldom known to be with any Man, that has so long forbore to Complement some one of their Sex with his Freedom? Yet so far you do Complement 'em too; Your not Marrying, is more than a Probability, that you will never meet with an Occasion to have an Hearty Quarrel with any of them. Thus, with a little Expence of your Good Humour, you Purchase the Favour of that Sex, at the same time giving them Security, that you never

The Epistle Dedicatory.

will be their Enemy, by Loving any one of them too
well; if every ones Love be any step to Happiness,
there wants but the 'tother Half of the Worlds know-
ing you, to make you the Happiest Man in it: While
you are Master of such an Easie Fortune, no Wise-Man
but must approve your Choicc: You have Preserv'd
your Liberty, and Tasted it; and how good a Friend
soever you are to the Bottle, yet your worst of En-
emies can't but still own that your a Batchelor, and no
Poet: You never yet were so far overtaken, that you
either Married, or Writ Verses; which that you ne-
ver may, (without any Complement to the Ladies) is
(while Yours) the Real Wish, of

S I R,

April 20th.
1699.

Your Oblig'd Friend

and Kinsman,

C. GIBBER

THE

THE PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. Batterton.

Long have we strove, with Passion and Grimace,
To show you Vice and Virtue's differing Face:
Virtue's Reward has woo'd you to its Charms;
And Vice expos'd, shou'd laugh you from its Arms.

Virtue we vainly offer to your Taste;
Tir'd with Instruction, and Agog for Jest,
T' abhor the wholesome Plainness of the Feast,
In vain on Poi's nous Vice wou'd Satyr trample;
For what you shou'd contemn, is your Example:
In vain we wear the Buskin, or the Sandal;
Your judging false makes our Instruction Scandal.
The Wise provok'd to wrong her Husband's Bed,
Was meant his Cure, by punishing his Head:
But you from hence, not kind, but jealous grow;
Think all Wives false, when Usage makes 'em so:
Reform the Brute, you keep the Woman true.
The Powder'd Fop, for Drawling Speech, and Dress,
Expos'd, shall laugh: But then so likes his Face,
He dresses in the Stage's Looking-Glass.
The High-kept Miss, when shewn the Fate of Filting,
Smiles! Gets a new Spark--- sets Fools a Tilting.
A second Time she's warn'd, and so improves,
Till in due Time about the Pit she roves,
Reduc'd to Doily's Stuff, no Stays, and dirty Gloves.
Thus ev'n sage Collier too might be accus'd,
If what he's writ's through Ignorance abus'd.
Girls may read him, not for the Truth he says,
But to be pointed to the Bawdy Plays:
Far be't to think such his Intention was.

Thus ev'n sound Physick, if wrong taken, shall
 Inflame Diseases, which it meant to heal:
 Now, though Men die, Physick has Vertue still.
 Wou'd you but come with Minds attentive bent
 To laugh at Follies, Vices to resent;
 Warn'd by the Dangers painted, wou'd you learn
 To shun abroad what's here the Wise Man's Scorn;
 Calm would be the Zealot's busy Rage;
 And good Men, Fearless, might support the Stage:
 Then, as at Athens, to learn Vertue's Rules,
 Crowds might we hope for from deserted Schools,
 To see our Labours, by just Laws allow'd;
 And Publick Treasures pay for Publick Good:
 Like them encourag'd, we like them might write;
 Athenian Hearers rais'd Athenian Wit.
 In favour then of us, begin to day
 To make a just Construction of a Play:
 So shall the impious Xerxes Terror move
 The chaste Tamira's Tears from Ruin'd Love.
 His first Attempt for Vertue you approv'd;
 But now, fair Nymphs, by nobler Passion mov'd,
 Our Author has to your just Praise design'd
 A brighter Image of your Sexes Mind.

THE EPILOGUE.

TO Friends, or Foes, whatever Fortune sends him,
 Gallants, our Author thus, in short, commends him.
 If from his present Dulness, Sirs, you fear
 The Danger of his Writing once a Year,
 To cure his future Itch of Writing Ill,
 Now Headlong throw him to the Muses Hell.
 But if from what you've seen, your Thoughts incline,
 That any Sparks of Heat or Genius shine,
 Let loose your Favours, wave Poetick Laws;
 And to your Wishes, swell him with Applause.

The Persons.

Xerxes,	King of Persia.	Mr. Verbruggen.
Mardonius,	} His Generals.	Mr. Hodgson.
Artabanus,		Mr. Betterton
Aranthes,		Mr. Scudamore.
Memnon,		Mr. Freeman,
Cleontes,		Mr. Thurmond,
Poet.	A Commander.	Mr. Boin.
	Artabanus's Lieutenant.	
	The King's Creature.	
	An Impudent Fellow.	
Tamira,	Wife to Artabanus.	Mrs. Barry.
Maskers, Magi, Soldiers, &c.		

The Scene PERSIA.

XERXES

XERXES.

ACT I.

The Scene, *Near Xerxes Palace.*

Enter Mardonius and Arantes.

Arant.

Mar.

HAVE Patience, brave *Mardonius*.

Patience! 'Tis the Coward's Virtue.

I'm a Soldier brought up in Arms;

And when the noble End of Life is gone;

My Country's Honour lost; my King with shame repuls'd;

Our Foes insulting; we still hopeless of Revenge;

Where is there room for Patience?

Arant. I am a Soldier, Sir.

Mar. Then talk like one.

Arant. I wou'd not talk; the Tongue's a Woman's weapon;

While there's a Greek on Earth, my Arm shall speak my Thoughts.

Mar. Why didst thou mention Patience then?

Arant. Because I knew 'twould Anger you.

I but oppos'd you, like a rapid Stream,

To make you Foam and Rowl with double force.

Mar. Or whom?

Arant. Th' Athenians! Think on Salamis;

In that deep Sea, the Persian Honour sunk.

'Twas there our dazzling Sun, Great Xerxes Glory, set for ever.

Mar. Confusion!

Arant. Does then the Name of Salamis offend you?

Mar. Furies and Hell! Canst thou be pleas'd to hear it?

Arant. I am—— To hear it does offend you.

And now I've rais'd you to my End propos'd,

I've that shall keep your brave Repentment warm;

Read there the List of our surviving Troops,

Which I with utmost care have join'd;

If yet you think it not too late to Head 'em,

To Morrow's Sun shall see a General Muster,

Where every Face will speak an Heart resolv'd.

'Tis true, they're scarce an Handful.

B Behold him then, this fatal Xerxes.

To the Numbers we set out with ; yet still
A brave Revenge, Revenge for Glory lost,
Is such an animating Cause,
As must inspire our Arms with double Fury.

Mar. Ay, now the Soldier speaks ! This Talk becomes thee ;
Methinks the Voice of Fate informs me now
That proud *Themistocles* shall dearly buy
His boasted Spoils of *Persia*.

My Heart's on fire at the reviving Thought,
And bounds to be in Action.
No more remains, but that we seek the Drooping King,
And Form him for the vast Exploit.

Aran. Brave *Artabanus* is in search of him ;
'Tis said, on Information, that the Enemy
Had a Design to hinder his Retreat ;
He Posted privately to th' *Hellepont*,
But ere he cou'd arrive a furious Storm
Had quite dispers'd his Bridge of Ships,
And that way stopt his Passage ;
How he Escap'd, I hear not.
See, Sir, *Artabanus* comes ;
We probably may learn of him.

Enter Artabanus Dejected.

My Lord ! You're Wellcome ! Doubly Wellcome now, but say,
How have the Gods dispos'd our Master *Xerxes* ?

Mar. If thou canst utter ought,
That may advance our eager Hopes, be bold,
And let thy Words come forth, as if the Fate
Of *Greece* were lodg'd upon thy Tongue ;
For know *Mardonius* stands with you resolv'd
On brave Revenge, or Death.

Art. Then Wellcome Death, for brave Revenge is lost.

Mar. What ! while our Lives are Ours ?

Art. Nothing is ours : *Xerxes* is no more Himself.

Mar. I grant *Thermopyla* and *Salamis*
Have Alter'd him——

But yet he lives, and while he lives there's hope.

Art. Far less, than ev'n his Death cou'd give us :—

'Tis true his Body crawls, and drags

A Frantick Being, his Soul is drown'd in lethe

Insensible, and deaf to Glory, or Dishonour,

Or were it possible my Silence cou'd

Conceal his shame ; By Heav'n

This loyal Hand shou'd stop my Tongue for ever.

Mar. Amazement seizes me, relate the Scene,

For my impatient Soul's all Ear to know

The Worst, that Fate can Threaten.

Art. Behold him then, this fatal Monarch *Xerxes*.

Late Universal Master of the Earth and Seas:

First of so Formidable, so vast an Army,

That as they mov'd, whole Rivers still were drain'd,

To quench 'em on their thirsty March.

Th' or'e-bunden'd Earth grew weary of her Load,

And when they clos'd their Squadrons groan'd to bear 'em.

Mar. By Arms a glorious Host, and wanting nothing but an Head.

Art. And thar, Alas! grown weak the noble Body dies:

Ev'n by an handful at the Fam'd *Thermopylae*.

(Fam'd indeed to *Græcian* Glory) 'twas mangled All,

Most shamefully subdu'd, and lost.

Mar. Nothing, but a *Xerxes*, cou'd ha' lost 'em.

Art. Behold him yet a second time.

The Master of his Fate: A Fleet so numerous,

Their vast Provision left a raging Famine on

The Neighbouring Coasts: The spacious Earth

Was stript of Men, and Women fill'd the Ground,

Ev'n the wide Element of Air cou'd scarce

Afford 'em Breath to fill their swelling Sails:

By Arms a glorious Body too, invincible

To Mortal Thought: But conscious Heav'n

Foreseeing, while it thus bestrid the Seas,

It must in Time have led the Earth in Chains,

Decreed it *Xerxes* for the fatal Head,

And that way Totter'd it to Ruin:

And now behold the amazing Change of Greatness!

By Heav'n, it strikes my Soul to think

This awful Man, that Muster'd half the World

In Arms, at *Salamis* shou'd be Reduc'd

So low, that ev'n a common Fisher-Boat

Without one Slave, to wait his Nod was All

He cou'd Command, to save his Person in a shameful Flight.

Mar. Wer't not for shame, my Eyes wou'd melt to hear

The moving Tale: But Tears are too Effeminate, No!

Let Girls, and Lovers weep! A Soldier shou'd

Resent his Fate: Why dost thou fold thy Arms,

And sighing shake thy Head? Is there beyond

This shameful Flight yet more of shame?

For that's the only pain, that galls a Soldier.

Art. There is (alas!) and a severe one too! His *Vain*

His Proud, (and what the History of Man

Cou'd never Parallel) his Monstrous Resolution

After Flight: He says he made th' *Athenians* Fly,

He lost no Battle! *Greece* still Trembles at his Name,

In Arms more Fam'd than ever,

And that the Envious World should know,

And when amaz'd I urg'd the contrary,

He turn'd away, and talk'd to *Sycophants*.

(4)

Who as I spoke, still sooth'd his lethargy:
To sum the Tale, in spite of all Opposing sense,
He has resolv'd to enter *Perila*,
In a splendid Triumph, I saw him move
Amidst his shameful Pageantry, in all
The Haughty Pride, and State of an Insulting
Conqueror; Poor Slaves, and Vagabonds are Hir'd,
To Personate the seeming Captives of
A Real Victory; vast Empty Coffers,
Suppos'd of Treasure taken from the Enemy,
High Call'd Elephants, Rich Gilded Trophies,
Spoils, and Armour, Trumpets, and Songs prepare his way,
The People stare upon the Gawdy show,
And Rend the Skies with Ecchoed Welcomes:
While he in solemn Pace stalks Proudly on
And ev'n out-swells the Hero of a Theatre.

Aran. O Vile Disgrace of Arms! A Triumph! Hell!

Mar. Impossible!

Art. Then it can't be true: Would it were not.

Mar. Gods! —No more! I'll hat, and stop this Vile Procession,
Charge his Folly home; my Honest Tongue,
Ev'n from this Precipice of Towering Pride
Shall break his Fall, and catch him back to Glory.

[Exit *Mar.*]

Art. Yet stay, my Lord, this Rashness may be Fatal;
'Tis Madness to oppose the Mad, (For so
Indeed you'll find him) let this Fit of his
Wild Frenzy pass; (I'm sure 'twill have an Interval)
Let's take him in his cooler Thoughts;
To Morrow were a fitter time.

Mar. You have instructed me: 'Tis well! To Morrow then:

Aran. What if we mingled with the Crowd to see him pass?

Art. I think 'twere well, to observe his Actions,
That we know to chide him.

Mar. Do you your Pleasure.

For me, I dare not trust my Temper,
I know 'twou'd burst, and ruin all: Farewel.

[Exit *Art.*]

Art. Hark, the Trumpets speak him near at hand;
And see the Pageantry appears!

[They stand apart.]

*Enter Cleonres, and a Poet preparing the way, and ordering the
Chorus for the Triumphal Song.*

Aran. What are these?

Art. The same I told you were so busy with the King;
While I exclaim'd against this Mad Solemnity:
That cringing Spark, now the Rough War is done,
Has purchas'd a Commission in the standing Guard;
The other is a Mungril Poet,
That never writ a Verse he did not like.

Nor er'e lik'd any more, than those the World had damn'd:
 The Vulgar with his Madrigals are caught by th' Ears;
 Excessive Impudence thrusts him into the Court:
 And there they laugh to hear him praise himself.

Aras. Him I guess to be the Orderer of this Days Foolery;
 What a Chorus too: We shall be entertain'd anon!

Art. Peace, lets observe 'em, [They stand apart.]

Cleo. O Glorious Day, were ever seen such Crouds
 Of pleas'd Spectators!

Post. Ah! Happy People! Happy Xerxes!

Now we shall turn the Glass of Time,
 And make it run the Golden Age again.

Cleo. Now Merit will have leave to show her Head;
 All Arts and Industry, the Heav'n-born Gift
 Of Poetry shall Flourish;

And Men of Wit, like you, shall be rewarded:

Believe me, Sir, You Grace the Lawrel,

Great Xerxes did it Honour, when he plac'd it there.

Post. I think so.

Cleo. You'll be the Envy of Parnassus.

Post. I always was, Sir: For d'ye observe me,

While other Fools were drudging, to acquire

A Name by the Pathetick, and the Dull sublime:

I unthought of, or'e a Bottle, would now and then

Surprize them with my Madrigals, my Songs,

My Whimms, and Knick-Knacks

Carry'd the Vogue of Town and Court before me;

Whipt off the Lawrel from Dispairing Brows,

And by the Hand of Merit fix'd it on my own.

Cleo. Were it not time the *Pæan* should be Sung?

Wee're just upon the Palace.

Post. Yes, Sir, it shall be sung, and Gloriously,

When I give the Word: I love to have 'em

Wait a little, it makes 'em take

The more notice of me—Now sound, ye Slaves!

That all the World may Hear—my Words.

Cleo. Prepare, the King approaches.

*The Chorus being hang'd on each side the Stage, Enter Loyalty,
 Love, Peace and Plenty.*

After a Martial Symphony, Loyalty Sings.

Loyalty.

P Repare, blest Sons of Art, prepare

To Raise the Thundring Voice of War:

Sing! sing! and sound the Hero's Fame,

Let Warlike Notes, his Warlike Deeds Proclaim.

Chorus. Sing, sing, &c.

Loy. Now cease the Noise, and while we meet him,
Let Love and softer Joys make haste to greet him.

Love Advances.

Love. Welcome Hero from the Toils of War!
Welcome! as Rest to Pains and Care:
Welcome! as kind returning Day,
To Souls that dore the Night away!
Welcome! as Hope to Lovers in Dispair.

Chorus. Welcome Hero from the Toils of War!
Peace and Plenty comes forward.

Peace & See! see! what softer Blessings wait

Plenty. The Happy Triumph of the Great;

Peace and Plenty fly before him;

Peace and Plenty make Mankind adore him;

Peace and Plenty Tune his Soul to Love.

And give below, a Taste of Joy above.

Grand Chorus.

Give him on Earth ye Pow'rs, long Love and Peace,

And after Death Immortal Bliss.

The Song ended.

Enter Trumpets sounding, a Train of Captive Kings and Princes, Women and Children, several Nobles bearing Palms, Soldiers with Spoils and Trophies: Then Xerxes Advances from the farther end of the Stage.

Xer. Thus in despite of their resisting Fate,
The unwilling Gods, those busy Rivals
In my Rising Glory, are forc'd
With sullen Envy to behold my Triumphs:
Look from your Christial Battlements! look down
Ye Pow'rs amaz'd, to view a Soul unshaken
By these baffled Storms of Chance! A Soul!
That dares resolve to bear your utmost wrongs,
And grapple with oppos'd Omnipotence.

Cleo. Thou Deity Ador'd! Immortal Xerxes Hail! *[Kneeling.]*
To Thee are held the lifted Hands of Persia
When War or Tumult wou'd molest her Quiet;
To Thee she bends her Knee, in humble Gratitude
For Foes subdu'd:

Let every Head bow down, and kiss the Earth
That bears him to our view: Soldiers and Children
Virgins and Lovers! All without distinction kneel
Yet lower, prostrate as the Vail of Night,
That wraps the Globe in Darknes: Down! Bow down,
And kiss the Earth with Adoration.

All fall upon their Faces, but Mardonius and Arantes, who stand unseen.

Art. O shame to Glory!

Arant. Incredible Stupidity!

Aside.

The Sun appears

Or' casts here.

Xer. Now by my yet untasted Joys of Power,
This looks a God—It is!

For see! The dazzled Sun contracts
His Golden Beams, he hides his Face and Blushes
To behold a Rival Power above him.

Art. Gods! How his drunken Fancy swells him. [*Aside.*]

Xer. Ha! What means this sudden Face of Death?
How fell these heaps of prostrate Bodies?

O Spleenful Fate! They'r dead! Malicious Planet!

Am I left alone to Rule, the Monarch

Of an Un-peopled World?—'Tis well ye Pow'rs,

Your dire Decrees shall be obey'd! Up! Up!

From your sleepy Graves! Rise all! Revive and take
New Life, from Power to give it.

Aras. Amazing Frenzy! [*Aside.*]

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Dread Sir, the Reverend *Magi* are at hand,
And come with Pious Joy, to Gratulate your Triumphs.

Xer. Let 'em come on, and we approve their Zeal.

Enter the Magi.

1. *Mag.* Long live Victorious *Xerxes*!
Thou Dread Commissioner of Fate, in whom
Th' Allknowing Gods repose, the Care and Business
Of the World below: From thee, Mankind receives
Its Happiness so fast, our Prayers to Heav'n
Are still but Thanks, for Benefits enjoy'd.

2. *Mag.* Thou Sacred Head! Instruct us to be Grateful
Both to the Gods, and Thee; What Hecatombs
Are due for this Auspicious Day?
How shall we thank the ever Glorious Sun,
For such a King? What Vows? What Offerings too
Are due to *Neptune*?

Who through the dangerous Seas,
Has thus return'd thee safe to *Persia*?
O say: Where shall we find our Victims
Worthy of their Altars?

Xer. How now! Priest-hood? Is this the way,
Your fawning Piety wou'd sooth an injur'd King?
Have not thole Pow'rs Alarm'd by Sea and Land,
Oppos'd my spreading Glory? Am I not

Xerxes still, and must at last ignobly sue
For Peace, by a precarious Sacrifice?

Yes Slaves, I'll Feast your Gods Ador'd
They shall have Offerings Priests! they shall!

Th' injurious Sun, the Seas and Wind that saw,
That sunk and scatter'd my stupendous Navy,
Shall feel the Vengeance of a Rousing Deity.

**Give Order that the Wind receive Three Hundred Lashes,
Let Fleeting *Aeolus* be whip'd from Pole to Pole,
Then drive him to some hollow Cell confin'd, and tell
The Roaring God, his Master *Xerxes* is reveng'd!**

1. *Mag.* O Impious Thought! Avert this Madness, Heaven!

Xer. How now! What would your Grave Devotion startle me?
Away draw out an able Band of Archers,
Mount 'em on the Battlements of you lofty Tower,
And let 'em shoot a Thousand Arrows gainst the Sun.

2. *Mag.* O Blasphemy!

Xer. As many Chains be thrown into the Sea,
And bind the Blue hair'd *Neptune* to a Rock?
Prepare an hundred Bars of vast hot glaring Iron,
Then plung 'em hilling down
Into the burning Bowels of the Deep;
And while his scalding Billows, boyl and foam
With raging Torture;
There let him Rave, and dash his batter'd Limbs,
Like a despairing Slave for ever.
Away! Take all the Wings of swift Revenge,
And see my Will perform'd! Now Priests!
Are these fit Offerings for your Mighty Powers?
I cou'd not stay to send 'em with your lazy Prayers
To Heav'n, your wanton Thoughts have dip't their Wings
Too deep, in Pleasures of the Earth, to let 'em mount so high.
Where's all their Idle Bolts, their brandisht Lightning now,
To blast the Man that dares oppose 'em?

2. *Mag.* While Frantick Passions talk so wild and loud,
The Voice of Reason is of little force:
But still remember, King,
Tho' while you live the Gods retard your doom,
Yet after death, a sure Revenge will come.

Xer. Away! ye senseless Dreamers of the World to come,
Who dare pretend to fright Mankind with Tales,
Of what shall happen after Death:
But yet can give us no account of what
The Soul endur'd, before it put on Flesh!
Hence from my Sight and Thoughts for ever!
Begon ye expensive Lumber of the World!

[*Exeunt Magi.*]

[*A shout at a distance.*]

Cleo. Behold Great Sir! A Thousand skilful Archers,
From yon High Spacious Tower,
Aloud Proclaiming War against the Sun!
They brace their itubborn Bows, and look
Resolv'd, to make their Arrows reach him.

[*Thunder.*]

Xer. By *Jove* they'r there! Ha! what means this Rising Storm?
By all my Power unshaken, my Foes above are start'd
At my daring Fury; I'll stand and view

The Godlike War? See! how the Fleeting Winds
 Are posted to the Sun, with Tydings of
 Impending danger! Hark! the dreadful News
 Is told, in Peals of burbling Thunder! Ha!
 By Arms the Noble Charge is given!

[The Stage is dark'd.]

For see! th' Alarm'd God retires!
 He dares not climb the Skies, he Reins his fiery Steeds!
 He stops! he turns 'em back, and rattles down
 The Eastern Hill of Heav'n! see! see!

[Lightning.]

[Falling]

How the foaming Coursers Flounce and Tear,
 And dash the spangled Skies behind 'em!
 Now by my own Immortal Soul: I'll mount
 The burning Car my self. I'll have 'k drawn
 By slow-paced Elephants, and every gladfom Day
 Shall shine a Year:

[A show'r of]

New Order, new Seasons shall be born,
 Ev'n from the womb of this stupendious darkness,
 New Nature shall arise, and bless the World
 With one Eternal Spring!

[The Sky is cleared.]

Cleo. Ha! The Sun appears again! I'll Humor his Extravagance.
 See, Sacred Sir, 'tis done! Behold
 A new born Light adorns the Skies,
 And seems t'applaud your vast Creating Thought.

Xer. Ha! 'Tis so! The harra's'd Gods are weary of the Fray:
 Why, let 'em rest, and now alone
 The business of the Earth shall fill my Thoughts:
 Draw near, ye Royal Captives of my Terrestrial War,
 And listen to pronouncing Fate! No longer now,
 The Chains of Victory, shall gall your Valiant Minds;
 Your future Bonds shall all be Love;
 For ever now be free! be safe! Xerxes
 Is no more your Foe!

No more the Toils of War shall break my Slumbers,
 The Lust of Conquest shall In flame me now no more,
 Nor Fate shall dare to cross my Will, which thus
 Resolves to give Mankind a General Peace,
 And rowl the wanton Globe in Pleasure.

{The Captives are unbound,
 and the People shout.

And now to spread my Resolution through
 The spacious World, here I Proclaim, to any Head
 That shall invent a new untasted Draught
 Of Luxury, Rewards unlimited,
 The Earth and Sea, shall throw their Treasure up
 To make him Happy——

Let Young Fledg'd Heroes court the noise of War,
 And starve their Pleasures: But to feed their Care,
 Let fond Ambitions Wing still scorn to rest,
 Still soar to Prey, without desire to taste:
 For me, more solid Bliss my Days shall Crown.

I'll taste the Pleasures which my Arms have won;
 Eternal Spings of Love, and Gushful Joy
 Shall feed my ravish'd Sense, without the power to Cloy.

A C T H.

The Scene, Xerxes's Palace.

Enter Cleontes and the Poet.

Cleo. **Y**our Fortune rises, Sir, Your Muse has Charm'd the King;

After the Banquet, he intends to see
 The Mask perform'd: But what's a fairer Demonstration
 Of his Favour, I am commanded to entrust you
 With his secret Love—He much relies on you.

Poet. Possible! O ye Gods! A Pimp! [*Aside.*]
 Then my Prayers are heard! The Devil's in't
 If I don't thrive now!

Her Name, Dear Sir?

Her Name and Quality: I'll melt her down
 With a Distick: She shall be Rythm'd to Raptures.

Her Name, Sir:

Cleo. Her Name is *Virtue*, Sir.

Poet. *Virtue*! She does not belong to the Court, Sir, does she?

Cleo. That must be our care to find out: You know

The King resolves to taste no common Pleasures;
 His Fancy therefore leads him to enjoy
 A Married Beauty, of untainted Virtue;
 One that dares defend her Honour,
 Against the utmost Storms of Fortune:
 Whom neither Threats, or Bribes of Power can shake,
 Nor all the subtle Arts of Languishing Desire.

Poet. Look you (not that I believe we shall) But
 Suppose we should find such a Lady? Pray
 What would his Majesty do with her?

Cleo. He'd first use all his Arts and Power to bend her Virtue,
 And if he found it yield, despise her;
 But if she stood his Love unmov'd,
 Then Force should give him a Delight,
 Which her consent would Ruin.

Poet. O ho! Then it seems, his Majesty wou'd
 Only have a Slash at her Virtue! Very Good!
 A Married Lady you say, that won't Cuckold
 Her Husband for Love or Money! Why now,
 After all, that must be a very odd

Cleo. Yet such a one there may be found, Sir.
 You know the Fair and Fair *Tamira*,
 The Wife of Noble *Artabanus*;
 The King, before her Marriage, was in Love with her;
 And often made Attempts upon her Honour:
 But meeting still severe Repulses,
 Offer'd her at last his Crown, and ev'n That,
 She with the same Indifference rejected.
 The General on this was Banish'd, she follow'd him,
 And to the hazard of her Life, embrac'd his Fortune.
 The King at last, with Absence cur'd his Love;
 And wanting Soldiers for the War with Greece,
 Call'd *Artabanus* home, restor'd him to his Honours,
 And gave *Tamira* to his Arms: But he
 Remembers now afresh her former Cruelty;
 And resolutely Vows to satisfy
 His old Revenge, and the Remains of Love.

Poet. A satisfaction for the Gods above!

But hark you Sir! Are you sure 'tis *Artabanus's* Wife?

Cleo. The same, I mention'd several,
 But most the King inclines to her.

Poet. By Jove we'll Dub his Lordship then! we'll Dub him:
 Now my Revenge is perfect: He gave me
 Nothing for my last Dedication. [Aside.

Cleo. I guess the King expects her at the Mask.
 But see our General, and *Artabanus* with him,
 I like 'em not, they'r Enemies to you and me.

Poet. Oh! Let me alone with 'em!
 You say the King has Positively
 Commanded none shall pass his Presence Arm'd?

Cleo. He has—I'll retire, and Inform him
 They are here, while you demand their Swords.

Enter Mardonius, Artabanus and Arantes.

Mar. What mean these double Guards?

Poet. Safety, Sir, Safety!

Mar. What art thou?

Poet. I am a Wit,

Art. I'll not take your word, Sir.

Arant. O 'twere Charity, my Lord, since he can't keep it.

Poet. I'll write no more Dedications, my Lord!

Art. 'Tis well resolv'd. 'Twere Insolence

To Libel Men of Honour: For what wou'd else,
 To tell the World they like a Muse,
 Which just before the world had Damn'd.

Poet. Your Lordship's Picture was not ill drawn before it.

Art. 'Twas every where unlike me;
 Thou drew'st my Honours all or'e white,
 Without one touch of shade to heighten it;

It look'd to me a flat insipid nothing.

Poet. The very Image of your Lordships Gratitude.

Art. 'Tis a vain Pride, not Gratitude Rewards

The Undeserving ; to Encourage thee

Were an Affront to Real Merit.

To the Presence—on my Lord!—

Poet. You must leave your Sword, Sir.

Mar. Who demands it ?

Poet. Your Humble-Servant, Sir.

M.v. Here, Take it Slave!

[*Presenting the Point.*]

Poet. Ah! not by the wrong Handle! I beseech you, Sir.

Mar. The meaning of this Insolence ! You Gentlemen,
Is it the King's Command?

Guard. My Lord, it is.

Art. 'Tis likely, dispute it not my Lord! There Gentlemen! *They give*

Mar. Gods ! That a Man so great in Arms, *their Swords.*
Should ever know the guilt of Fear ! See where he comes,
Amidst his Court of Women now ! O shameful Change.

Enter Xerxes, follow'd by a Train of Ladies, Cleontes in Dis-
course with him. Tamira amongst them.

Xer. Did you see her say you ?

Cleo. She follows in the Train, my Lord.

Xer. Let her be near us at the Mask ; I wou'd
Appear a gentle Lover first, and try
The force of Passion, and Heart wounding Eloquence;
I know tho' Real, they would plead in vain ;
But, that 'tis heightens my delight : For when
She thinks the Lamblike Lover, dying
In the vain pursuit : The bounding Lyon then
Shall start, and drag th' unwilling Prey.

Aran. Health to your Majesty.

Xer. *Aranthes* welcome ! welcome *Artabanus*,
Valiant Mardonius welcome !

Mar. I never durst be a Coward, Sir—But now—
Methinks you should not know me for *Mardonius*.
I us'd to wear a Sword!

Xer. O ! 'Twere needless, unless you had Enemies.

Mar. There still are *Gracians* Living, Sir.

Xer. And they were born to live.

Mar. Yes, and Conquer too ! Your Pardon, Sir,
I love 'em not, tho' they deserve my Love.

Xer. Ha!

Art. Take heed, my Lord, your words have mov'd the King.

Mar. Then does yours soften him ? For I want Temper.

Xer. [*Aside.*] I'll find a fitter time to silence him.
Such Men are hateful, and will oppose my Pleasures.

Art. We came to Intreat a private Hour with your Majesty.

Xer. The Court at present is dispos'd to Mirth
And Pleasure: After the Mask I'm yours.

Aran. We'll Attend your Majesty.

Xer. Your Entertainment shall be soft
And pleasing, what the Musick wants, may be
Supply'd in Love: But that's a Feast, my Lord. [*To Art.*
You never seek abroad, that are so sure
A welcome Guest at home.

Art. I owe that Blessing, Sir, to your Indulgence;
And see she's here! Your Majesty will pardon me?

Xer. 'Tis your Duty, Sir: By Heav'n [*Art. goes to Tam.*

He loves her, after four Years Enjoyment!

Had she been mine, er'e this I'd loath'd

The Sight of her—Not but she's Fairer, than the Beams of Day;
Softer than a Lovers hope,—and Virtuous,—to an Insolence.

Tam. [*To Art.*] I hope you'er not displeas'd, my Lord.

Art. No! But what was it brought you hither?

Tam. Indeed the hopes of seeing you.

Art. D'ye not fear the King should Gaze upon you?

Tam. If you fear it, I'll retire.

Art. No, 'twou'd be observ'd: But yet beware of him.
He often dwells upon your Praise of late.

Tam. Indeed I'm sorry if it troubles you,
Else could hear it with Indifference.

Xer. Come Sirs, our Entertainment waits us.

Artabanus! You'll trust me near your Lady.

Art. That Trust will be her Protection, Sir.

Xer. Begin the Mask.

*While a Symphony is Playing, Luxury arises sleeping on a Bed
of Roses, and Mercury Enters to him.*

Mercury. Awake soft Luxury, awake

The smiling Gods befriend thee,

And with Pleasures here attend thee;

Now Feast thy Senses, and Receive

The sweetest Joy, the Gods can give.

Awake, &c.

*The Scene Drawing, discovers several Deities, Attended by their
several Pleasures: Cupid Advances.*

Cupid. With me, these Rival Gods contend,
And Each asserts his Power to bless;
Thy Voice alone the strife must end,
Who knowest all Pleasures in Excess:
And wanton Cupid comes to prove,
Life has no Joy like Lawless Love.

Luxury. What kind Reward shall I receive
From them, to whom my Voice I give.

Cupid.

- Cupid. *That thou Unbrib'd mayst give thy Voice,
Eternal Freedom to possess thy Choice.*
- Mars. *Mars advances to a Warlike Symphony.
Sound! sound! the Trumpet sound,
The Warriors Soul Alarm!
He Fights!—They Fly!—and now with Conquest Crown'd
What God can give a Nobler Charm?*
- Lux. *No more! no more! Ah throw thy Arms away:
For with 'em Love shall Sport and Play;
The Trumpet now shall softer sound,
And swell, and weep, and gently wound.
Hymen Descends.*
- Hymen. *If softer Love can make thee Blest,
That Bliss in Marriage is possess.*
- Indiff. *Indifference Interrupts him.
Away! away! no Life can be
Like that, Mankind enjoys in me:
Indifference is the happiest State,
On which no Care or Sorrows wait,
Nothing hating, nought admiring,
Never Wanting, no 're Requiring;
Never Pining for Possession,
Nor yet slighting kind Occasion;
Joy is welcome still to cheer me,
Sorrow never shall come near me.*
- Mar. and Indiff. together. *If Peaceful Joys can make thee blest,
In him, or me they are possess.*
- Lux. *Begon! Dull Pair, I cannot take,
Or grant a Joy in either:
Be chain'd for ever Back to Back,
And wander through the World together.*
- Chorus. *Begon Dull Pair, he cannot take, &c.*
- The Pleasures Bind Marriage and Indifference together, and drive them off the Stage: Then Venus advances,*
- Venus. *Would you know the sweetest Joys,
Which Virtue wisely keeps from Fools;
Then steal a Mistress, Break all Ties,
That would confine your Love to Rules.
From Vulcan forc't to hide my Charms,
I Modest still, and Cold must prove:
But Ah! when in my Warriours Arms
I live! and give a loose to Love.*
- Lux. and Venus. *All other Loves but faintly tast,
Or still repeated fly too fast.
But the Lover
Will Discover.*

Lux.

*Changing
Ranging
Makes the Bliss for ever last.
True Joy is now reveal'd,
Come Pleasures Dance and Play.
All! All! To Venus yield,
Fair Venus Wins the Day.*

While the Pleasures Dance, the Four last Lines are Repeated in a Grand Chorus. After which the Company rises.

Xer. Now, my Lords, what think you of these softer Pleasures?
Is not a peaceful Court adorn'd with Beauties?
Far beyond the Prospect of a dusty Camp?
Shew me an Army now, that dares resist 'em!
That cou'd Unconquer'd view their Charms!

Mar. I cou'd ha' shewn you one, Sir, your Pardon, Ladies!

Xer. What! — They were valiant old Soldiers!

Mar. No! Young and Lusty, in their Prime of Years and Health;
I dare allow the Ladies each to Conquer seven Men,
But Seven Hundred Thousand wou'd have held 'em to't.

Xer. You are allow'd, this Liberty, my Lord,
Your Years Excuse you.

Mar. I ha' lost no Taste of Manly pleasures.

Xer. How did the Musick take you?

Mar. Tho' it were loose, I cou'd ha' lik'd it
In a proper Season, to me 'twas harsh
And out of Time, when I have nothing else
To do, — I'll have a Mistress, and a Lute.

Xer. Why, what have Men to do on Earth
But to Indulge their Appetites? How shou'd
We stop the swift Career of Time, unless
We load him well with Pleasures ere he flies away?
Old Men I find can be content to Dream
Of Happiness: Away! Some Fruit and sprightly Wines!
Conduct the Ladies to the Grove of Jessamines,
And strow the best Perfumes of Nature as they Pass,
Your Eare *Aranthes.* *(The Courtiers Conduct the Ladies.)*

Tam. Pray, my Love, Excuse me! I dare not follow 'em,
(to Art.) During the Mask, the King let fall
Some wanton Words, that Trouble, and Offend me,
Forgive this Fault, I'll ne're be seen at Court agen.

Art. This Prudence has Oblig'd me: Farewell.

Exit. Tamira.

Xer. (to Aran.) Nor e're in Common talk speak slightly of my Triumph?

Aran. My Royal Lord his Private Thoughts I know not,
If they were ill, he ne're wou'd utter 'em,
I have indeed observ'd him Thoughtful when
We speak of You, and he has sought
This Opportunity to tell

Xer. I can Ill spare it now, my Pleasures Wait,
And they Brook no Delay.

Aran. Beseech Your Majesty but a Moment.

Xer. A Moment ! 'tis an Age ! Let him be short.
Too Plain I read his fullen Thoughts,
He takes an Ill time to Thwart me !
Let him be ware my sleeping Will,
For if it wakes Disturb'd, it may be Fatal.
Now Sir ! Your Greivances !

Mar. Are they not Written in my Face ?

Xer. I read nothing there but Age,
And that indeed's a Greivance !

Mar. Sir, You love me not !

Xer. Go on ! have you any more ?

Mar. Gods !

Xer. Speak lower.

Art. Forbear, my Lord, you'll Ruin All !

Mar. Speak you then, that can be Master of your Passion.

Art. My Royal Lord, may I intreat Permission,
I unload that Grief, which Heavily
Has brought us to the Court ?

Xer. You have our leave, the rest be silent,
'Till I commission 'em to Answer.

Aran. I submit.

Mar. I'll do my best.

Art. Then thus, my Lord.

We Grieve to think your late Expensive Triumph,
Was not worth the Summs it Cost You : That all
Your Trophies, Spoils and Treasure ta'en from Greece,
Are now thrown by for Lumber :
That ev'n Your Royal Captives led in Golden Chains,
Were Abject Slaves before they wore 'em :
That a Benumbing Lethargy has seiz'd Your Soul,
And sunk your Glory in Unmanly Pleasures :
That Women, Flatterers, and servile Poets are
Your only Favourites now : That we
Whose Loyal Swords have ev' er been Your Guard,
E're we can gain Admittance to your Sight,
Are Forc'd to give 'em up to base born Slaves,
Least we should sheath 'em in Your Jealous Heart.
We Greive, that your surviving Soldiers are
So little known, the many Thousands
In Your Service Dead, so soon Forgotten.

Xer. Proceed.

Art. You may remember, Sir,
In Your Prosperity of Arms, when once
You drew Your Hardy Millions up, and saw
Th' Amazing snace of World was taken,

} *Aside.*

To contain their Numbers,
 You then bedew'd Your Cheeks with Tears to see
 So many Gallant Souls in perfect Health,
 Which You was sure in One short Age of Man
 Th' Inevitable Throat of Death must swallow.
 If then so late, because a certain end
 Cou'd move Your Soul so far, what Floods of Grief,
 What Raving Madnes shou'd Possess you,
 When You reflect, that they were all Devour'd
 At a Meal :

One Fatal Battle slew 'em for the Tyrants Feast,
 And for his Table spread the Earth with Slaughter.
 By Heav'n our Foes Report, they are asham'd,
 T'have Conquer'd Men, that can so tamely bear their Losses ;
 Others less insulting say, (and that indeed does wound us)
 That we stand ready all, and raving for Revenge,
 But want an Animating King to lead us.

Mar. Nay, Sir! they talk yet worse than this——

Xer. 'Tis not yet your time to speak.

Mar. Would it were!—I ha' done.

Xer. Have you any more ?

Art. No more my Lord, but that
 You wou'd believe my Words, the Dictates of
 A Loyal Heart, that bleeds to serve you.

Xer. *Arantes*, You !

Aran. My Lord, my Griefs are told by *Artabanus*.

Xer. Now Sir, you have leave.

Mar. I am unarted, Sir, in any grace of Speech
 To stir the Soul! my words are plain and honest,
 Too short to hide a Crime with Eloquence ;
 I'm down-right angry I, where er'e I see
 The Face of Shame : Ye Gods! had I but ta'en
 The Cue t'have spoke, the half what he has utter'd,
 Ye had appear'd a—I want a Name to call a King by :
 But come, Sir, I'll return the Musick you have giv'n:
 I've yet a Tongue will better speak
 My Thoughts ; a Voice, that once cou'd warm you faster
 Than a Silken Mistriss, and was, perhaps,
 As loath to let you sleep a' Nights.

Xer. Where is this Powerful Orator ? Let's hear him !

Mar. Bid the Trumpets Enter.

Aran. Now you strike him home, my Lord.

Enter Trumpets.

Mar. Here! here's th' harmonious Tongue shall plead my Cause,
 And rouse your startling Soul to Glory! Sound a Charge. (Mar.)

Art. Yet hold! By Heav'n, I plaud my Fellow Soldiers heat! [Embracing
 And see, my Lord! what hardy Squadrons join to back him. [Looks out.
 Look! how they move! what, what a Martial Grace and Order!

Gods! Victorious Terror's in their Eyes, and now
 Suppose within a well pitch'd Field,
 The swelling Foe, advancing to our Formost Ranks;
 We fix our chosen ground, and stand impatient
 To receive 'em! The Neighing Steeds too foam and champ!
 And tear the Earth, and shew a noble lust of War!
 And see they come! the glowing Soldiers shour;
 The Signal's giv'n, and Death in ghastly wounds
 Deals various Fate around him!
 While Clashing Armour, Spears, and Rattling Shields,
 Drums, Fifes, and Trumpets, (Glorious Horror!)
 With their stupendious Clangor crack the Skies!
 Now stretch the Allarming Voice of War! Sound, till
 From your swoll'n Veins, the Springing Blood gush forth!
 Imagine now, the eager Arms of Victory
 Extending to embrace us! sound! as if
 The Glorious Scene were here in real Action!
 Sound! and wake the Ghost of this departed Hero.

Art. O Glorious Harmony!

{ They Sound

Aran. O Powerful Charm!

{ a Charge.

Mar. By Arms, it sets my glowing Veins on fire!

I burn! my Spirits rave with fury for the War!
 Away to Horse! to Arms! why stand you, Sir, unmov'd,
 As if a low born Fear, had fix'd you here Inanimate?
 Can you be deaf, when great Revenge and Honour call?
 Are there such Charms in a detested Sloth and Ease?
 God's where have you Tameness left, to stand thus long
 Suspected, not to dare? Sound a fresh Alarm!
 And let the Martial Din ungrave the Dead
 To rouse him!

Xer. On Forfeit of your Lives, forbear your Insolence!
 Audacious Traitor! thus to Brand
 My Hallow'd Pleasures, with the Name
 Of Slothful, Ease and Fear! I'll have thee think,
 Unknowing Slave! That nothing in it self
 Is Good or ill, but as it pleases me.

Mar. I say no! There will be shame in Cowardice,
 Tho' Xerxes were a Soldier!

Xer. Ha!

Aran. Forbear, my Lord, consider 'tis your King that hears you!

Mar. I ha' no King, 'tis Merit, not a Crown
 That makes a King, when Pride and Sloth debase
 The Soul of Majesty: The Crown's a Toy,
 No more in Worth, than what it weighs in Gold:
 I scorn a King, whose Robes can only speak him Royal.

Xer. Witness ye Gods! How loth I am to wake,
 And crush this Slave, who like a Crawling Insect dares
 Disturb the sleeping Lyon—

Mar. A Lyon !

By Heav'n I've seen a Hare, a Womans Courage
Dare beyond thee ; the Martial *Artemisia*,
Whose Aiding Arm in Fight, supported and disgrac'd thee !
The Warlike Woman shew'd a Manly Rage,
The Courtly King a Womans Trembling Fear:
Ever wer't thou last in Battle, formost
In the Flight, humble in Danger, and when
Thy Danger's past, Insulting !

Xer. Seize the Traitor ! hence ! and bear him to a Dungeon !
There let the furlly Lyon Growle and Champ,
His Galling Chains in vain ! I'll try him in the Den ;
Hard Fare, perhaps, Darkness and Griefs may tame him.

Mar. A Dungeon ! Now by the Power of Arms, thou'lt found
The only place, an honest Man can bear in *Persia* !
Thou poor Inverted King, whose Favour is Disgrace,
Whose Frowns are Honour now ; Thou canst not raise
My Glory more, than thus proclaiming to the World
Thou hatest me : But when

This Lyon grumbles or'e his Chains alone ; Beware
Thou send no *Persian* Fools to gaze at me ;
Left in my round of thought, I should believe 'em *Greeks*
That keep me there ; and bounding from my Couch,
Grasping with Fury the mistaken Prey,
With Flaming Eyes, should stare their Souls away. [*Exit.*

Xer. To the Dungeon hence, and load him down with Massy Fetters.
By Heav'n I'll find a way to take
An undisturb'd Repose : I'll have my Streams
Of Christial Pleasure, clear'd of all these Martial Weeds,
I'll tear 'em by the Roots, and throw 'em useles by.

Art. My Lord, Hower'e your Soldiers hear——

Xer. I'll have no more to do with saucy War !
Were now Ten Thousand times the Millions
I ha' lost in Arms, Intreating, Begging as for life,
One animating Word to bid 'em move,
I'd not unsheath my Sword, to be Enthron'd with *Jove*. [*Exit,*

Art. Why ! why ye Pow'rs ! has such a tainted Soul
The Care of th' Empire ? Or if the Gods have stamp'd
Divinity on Kings, fixing them far above
The Reach of Common Men ; why then have we
The Eyes of Reason to Inspect their Faults ?
Why are we Born with Souls to loath Dishonour,
And yet by Honour bound to bear it ?

Aran. How ! To bear it ! No ! That Loyalty's Dishonorable,
That bids me bear Dishonour : When Subjects
Are no more the Care of Kings, we then
Have only left the Laws of Nature to Protect us,
And Nature tyes us all to Self Defence.

We must in time resent the Blows we've taken :
Mardonius's Freedom must be sought, and suddenly:
 The Current of our Treasure ebbs too fast;
 It must be stop't by Right and Priviledge :
 The late Expences of our Gaudy Shame,
 Exceeds th' Account of Necessary War :
 And shall we sleep, when from our Hands by Force,
 The Gripe of Tyranny has wrung our Fortunes.
 More I cou'd say,
 If I believ'd that Words cou'd win you to
 An Honourable Action.

Art. Arambes, I was never slow to such a Call,
 Nor needs the Cause a Tongue,
 But yet the Undertaking's difficult,
 And will require our Friends best Counsel
 To Night at my own House I'll Summon 'em,
 There speak our Grievs at large.

*And may the Blest Event to Ages prove ;
 No Crown fits safe without the Peoples Love.*

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

The Scene, *The House of Artabanus.*

Enter Memnon with a Paper.

Mem. **H**onesty's a Notion, and only Reigns
 Like Womens Chastity in cold Untempted Minds:
 It must be so! I ever thought that Villany
 Had an ugly Face; but now I view it
 In the Flattering Glafs of Interest, it seems
 No Monster!—Of a fairer form than half starv'd Virtue.
 —Yet let me think a little—
 Here I am trusted with the Names of several Men,
 Who have combin'd to free th' Imprison'd General,
 To seize the King, and force him to renew
 The War with *Greece*! Nay, I've subscrib'd my own,
 To assist 'em too, and now am going to inform
 The General of it: The Undertaking is but Just;
 For Old *Mardonius* lov'd the King, and lies
 In Chains, because he offer'd proof on't: *Xerxes*
 Is unfit to hold the Reins of Empire;
 He throws 'em loose, and lets it run to shame,
 And Luxury—Why don't I haste to stop him then?
 And by the Execution of what I've sworn to act;

Prevent

Prevent my Countries Ruine—But stay! suppose
 I fail in my Design, (as sure 'tis dangerous)
 If I am taken, can my Country save me?
 Or if I succeed, am I sure my Country
 Will be grateful? They'll say perhaps 'twas Interest
 Led me on:

And let me starve, while they partake the Blessing!
 They may be base, and probably they will!
 Then 'Tis not safe to trust 'em, nor can I
 On th' other side be sure of Life, if I delay
 This great Discovery:—Why then 'Tis fixt!
 I'll take the surest way to find Reward from *Xerxes*:
 And when my Pardon, and Reward are sign'd,
 Then let 'em call me Fool, or tell the King
 I am a Villain. [Exit.

Enter Artabanus, Arantes, &c.

Art. Never was Cause, my Friends, more chearfully
 Embrac'd, never were Hands more fit for Action,
 Nor ever greater Glory waiting on success:
 'Tis not the Thirst of others Wealth, or Dignities,
 Nor Envy of a favour'd Faction, that inflames us,
 No Mercenary end: 'Tis Bleeding Honour calls us
 To revenge her Wounds; 'tis *Xerxes*, not the King
 That stands accus'd: If *Xerxes* can relent,
 Still let him wear the Crown; if not, the Crown
 By us remov'd, can dignify
 Another Head for Empire.

Aran. 'Tis not who Reigns, but who Reigns well is King.

Art. He that neglects the Regal Office,
 Should be compell'd to lay it down;
 And we who feel the smart of that neglect,
 Are only proper Judges, where to place it.

Aran. Let us but once more see *Mardonius* Sworded,
 We shan't be long to seek a Man, that's fit
 To wield a Scepter: I long
 To hear how he receives our Undertaking!
 Why lingers *Memnon* thus? may we believe
 He's not refus'd Access to him.

Art. You may, I have unbarr'd the Prison Gates with Gold.

A Servant Whispers Artabanus.

Come Gentlemen, the Night begins to walt,
 Our Small Collation waits us: *Arantes*,
 Pray conduct our Friends, I'll give some Orders
 In the House,—and follow You. [Exit. Aran. with the rest.

Enter Tamira in her Night Dress, Weeping.

Art. What mean these Tears *Tamira*?

Tam. O can you love like me, and ask that Question.
 'Tis true, I counsel'd what you have undertaken,

Yet

Yet cannot help my Womans Fears: Not but
 I love your Honour more, than both our Lives;
 Yet when I run o'er the Frightful Hazards,
 The Dangers imminent you meet
 To purchase and preserve it, than I could wish
 Some Humble Shepherd were my Love,
 Whose sole Ambition were a Rosy Chapter,
 Not a Crown:
 Who in some sweet Retreat of blooming Nature,
 Naked of Honours, but Enrich'd with love
 Might give, and take delight unknown to Crowns,
 And drive with undisturb'd Repose,
 The melting Hours before us.

Art. Be witness Heaven, how these words Transport me!
 For still thy Fears I know are born of Love,
 And Love's of Kin to Honour.—Could'st thou behold
 Ev'n in the softest Moment of our Joy,
 Our Native Country in Distress, The Bloody Arm
 Of Tyranny just rais'd to give the Wound;
 And not with Horror throw me from thy Arms
 To stop the Blow? Think what a Glorious Tale,
 Futurity shall Register of him,
 That first stept out to save her!
 And if opposing Death should cross the Brave Attempt,
 Then shall it farther still be said for thee,
 This Man, this honest Man, the Memorable *Artabanus*,
 Beyond his Life, his Country Lov'd,
 Yet equal with his Country lov'd *Tamira*.

Tam. O shall it then be said *Tamira's* Fears,
 Oppos'd this Glorious Enterprize? Perish
 That Wife is so Impatient of her Joys;
 That to Indulge her Love at home,
 Would turn her Husband's Honour out a starving! No!
 Go on my dearest Lord! leave me, and cheer,
 Those Gallant Friends have sworn to assist you:
 If you return with Life, my Love will find
 A thousand thousand ways to welcome you—Hark!
 What knocking's that? who can it be thus late. [*A loud knocking.*
 Do you expect more Friends, my Lord?
 Pray Heav'n no ill be towards us!

Art. Be not concern'd, my Love, I guess
 'Tis *Memnon* from the General,—within there!
 Hast to the Portal, know first their Business [*Enter a Servant.*
 Ere you give admittance, unless it be
 To my Lieutenant *Memnon*: Be calm, my Love.

Tam. I cannot while this Noise continues!
 You shall not stir, my Lord; Heavens! How I tremble!

Art. Now! who is it? [*Re-enter Servant with the Steward.*

Serv. My Lord, your Steward.

Art. The News!

Stew. Defend your self, my Lord! Some Danger's towards you.

Going to my Rest, within the outward Lodge,

I heard the thronging tread of Passengers,

Whom from the Window I discover'd

To be the Guards:

They now are Marching round the Orchard Wall,

In Order to beset the House;

I heard 'em say too, as they pass'd along,

Kill none, let 'em be taken all alive.

Art. Death and Horror! we are betray'd!

Tam. O Fly, My Lord!

Let me conjure you by the Pangs

Of my distracted Love, fly! fly! er'e yet

A moment can befriend you.

Art. Impossible! I leave my Friends in danger!

Tam. Run! haste, and rouse 'em from the Jaws of Ruin. [*To the Serv.*
O Fatal Enterprize!

Art. That we may gain some time to think, lead you

The Servants to the Eastern Gate,

[*To the Steward.*

Command 'em on their Lives to keep it Barr'd,

'Gainst all would force their Entrance, Gods!

Was ever Noble Action so untimely born;

O *Tamira*!

Tam. What Power, what Fate can stop our headlong Ruine?

Some pitying Gods look down, and stretch an Arm,

To keep our Lives and Love unparted!

O that the Earth wou'd open wide, and take us thus,

Thus undivided to the Centre!

[*Throwing her Arms on him.*

Art. If we deserve your Rage ye Pow'rs!

Now hurl your Thunder to destroy us:

But strike us closer, not asunder with your Bolts.

O! must we part *Tamira*!

Curst be the Hell born Slave that durst betray

Our Honest lives: Ill rest betide his Frighted Soul,

Devouring Guilt,

Like the *Promethean* Vulture know his Perjur'd Heart,

And mark him for the Carrion of Mankind.

(*Ara. within.*) Ruin'd! betray'd, and lost!

Art. O my Friends!

Enter Arantes, and the rest in Disorder.

Aran. Distraction! *Memnon*!

Art. Ha! what of him?

Aran. He! He! That curst, that Canker'd Slave for fear,

Or base Reward has sold us all: I now

Descry'd him by the Distant light of Torches,

In Conference with the King, who Smiling comes
'Tis Rear to catch us in the shameful Toil!

Art. O that a curse wou'd kill the Villain!

Aran. Let's fend it then upon our pointed Sword,
Since w'have no hope of safety left,

Here! let us fix our stand, and if the Villain
Dares to Face us, rush all at once to reach his Heart,
And die like Men, Reveng'd upon our Ruin.

Art. Impossible to 'scape such Numbers: No!
Let's down to th' Postern Gate, and try
To leap the Orchar'd Wall, or now the Darkness of
The Night Befriends us; Mingle with the Guards
That are in search of us, seem Hot as they
In the pursuit, and that way take our chance,
To scape 'em Undiscover'd.

(a loud Noise without)

Aran. A way! they are upon us:
Succeed or not, we know at last to die.

Art. I follow you.

Exit. with the rest.
(Tamira holds Arta.)

Tam. My Lord! my Love, I cannot leave you!
O let me part with you, and life together!

Art. This is no time to part like Lovers,
Nor yet to tell thee half my Fears!
The King! Revenge! and lust! I can no more
But shou'd thy Frighted Virtue call for help
Let this speak for me.

(gives her a Dagger.)

Tam. By Heav'n it shall, and Home: But do not Venture
To the Orchard: Here in the House below there lies
A Secret Vault, in former Times of some Religious use
And now is only known to me: There I conjure you lye
Conceal'd till safety call you forth: Nor Hell, nor Envy can
Betray you thence, unless I prove Unfaithful.

Art. O might we never part till then!
Hark! They are Entering! show me!

Exeunt.

*After a Noise of the Gates being Broken down, Enter Xerxes,
Memnon, Officers and Guards, with Torches.*

Xer. Where! Where's this, Infernal Brood of Traytors;
By Heav'n I'll Crush 'em in the Nest! Away!
Look out! Search every Hole, that Fear can Creep into:
Nor Earth, nor Hell shall Hide 'em from my Vengeance!

*Enter at the other Door Cleontes, and Guards Dragging in two
of the Conspirators Dead.*

Cleo. Here! This way, show the Bodies to the King!
Great Sir! two of the Conspirators,
This Moment Breath'd their last.

Xer. Was't not my strict Command to take 'em all alive?
Who was it dar'd to kill 'em?

Cleo. My Lord! it was their own Dispair,
For e're we cou'd beset the Orchard,
These two, with several more, who just before Escap'd us,
Made an Attempt to leap the Wall;
We Interposing in the Moment,
Demanded 'em our Prisoners;
At this, they looking round with hopeles Eyes,
To one anothers Breasts their pointed Swords advanc'd,
And rush'd at once to an Embrace
Of Friendship and of Death.

Xer. O spiteful sullen Traytors! Bring in the Torture!
By Heav'n I'll have 'em Rackt to Life again!

Mem. My Lord, these Wretches are but the Limbs
Of the Conspiracy, it only halts for want of them!
If you would have it hush'd for ever,
Cut off the Head, their *Artabanus*!

Xer. Thou hast inform'd my Rage: Say Slaves,
Among those that fled, saw you *Artabanus*?

Cleo. No, my Lord, we rather choose to let them fly,
Than give him time to 'scape, while we pursu'd em.
If with the rest he was, he's still i'th House, my Lord.

Mem. Then we are secure of him: I left him here;
But see, they've found his Wife,
If he lies yet conceal'd, she must of course
Be privy to the Place.

[*Enter Tamira Guarded.*]

Xer. Now! Is *Artabanus* found?

Guard. My Lord, we've left no place unsearcht
That Jealousy can enter; but can no where find him:
And when we urg'd his Lady to discover him,
She call'd us Fools, and said we ask'd her Idle Questions.

Xer. So brave! But this is done in spite to me:
The Traytre's knows I love, and therefore she insults:

But thus I tear the Passion from my Breast,
And in its room, take fell Revenge and Hate!
Bring in the Rack! I'll try if that can make

A Woman speak her Mind.

Mem. 'Tis here, my Lord.

Xer. See you that, Lady?

Tam. Yes, and feel it in my Thoughts.

Xer. What think you of it?

Tam. That I could bear it, Sir, to avoid a greater pain.

Xer. What's that?

Tam. Disloyalty to my Husband, and my Love.

Xer. That shall be try'd: Where is your Husband?

Tam. I have hid him, Sir.

Xer. Where Traytre's?

Tam. I dare not tell you, Sir; he has commanded me I should not.

Xer. He then commands thee to the Torture!
If thou wouldst 'scape it, speak! for I will know.

Tam. You shall! You ask to know

Where I have hid my Husband.

Then I must tell you, Tyrant, in my Heart,

Where you nor yours can enter to remove him.

Mem. Put her to the Tryal, Sir: the Rack keeps no Secrets;
Women are so impatient of a little pain,
That only squalling in their Natural Labour,
They'll forswear Mankind.

Aside to Xerxes.

Xer. By Heav'n, I'm pleas'd to see her Folly rave,
Thou talk'st as if the Rack were but a sport: Hast thou
Been ever sensible of any pain like this?

Tam. Ten thousand times a greater: I have known
The pains of hopeless Love: Nay, after that,
The Agonies of Blushing to Reward
The Man that lov'd me.

Xer. How feelingly she talks of Love, ev'n in
The Face of Horror: Art thou not afraid of Death?

Tam. No! This Moment from my Window I beheld
These two unhappy Wretches run into
His Arms, and see: how soon they're quiet! Death?
Alas! He's now my nearest Friend! look here!

I wear him in my Bosom, Sir,
My Husband plac'd him there.

Xer. Thy Husband! To what end.

Tam. During his Absence to keep Dishonour from me.

Xer. O the Inveterate Slave! *Memnon*, Walk unobserv'd
Behind, and rest the Dagger from her.

Aside.

Mem. I shall, my Lord.

[He steals round.]

Tam. That Whisper has a Meaning I am jealous of;
By Heav'n 'tis so! The Villain meets my purpose!

[Observing Mem.]

Xer. Once more! Where is thy Husband?
Confess, and yet preserve thy Life.

Tam. Thus far I will confess: That I am now indeed
Almost afraid of Death: For it would grate my Soul,
To leave my Husbands Ruin unreveng'd
(For I despair again to make him happy)
And that the only wish, that makes me fond of Life.

Forgive me Duty, if I mistake the Breast;
But great Revenge and Love, Instruct me here!

[Stabs Mem.]

Xer. Disarm her! Seize her Slaves!
I'll trust the Tygres loose no more.

Adam. Furies and Death, she's reacht my Heart.

[Dies.]

Tam. So may all Traytors dye! 'Tis done!
The Noble Task, that Love had set me
For the Remains of Life, is nobly ended;
And now I am at leisure for
The Idle Holy day of Death.

Xer. No silent Traytors! thou shalt be Years a dying.

Tam. Let me be Ages, Sir.

Xer. Begin the Torture!
I'd have my Glory live for ever!

By Heav'n the mocks my Vengeance.

[They kindle her.]

Now, where are your smiles or Scorn, Lady?

Tam. Here! in my Soul, which thus contains the **Pyrrhus**, or still not
Thinking to bow it down to **Baleful** —
Alas, my Body now wou'd sink **Earth** —
With horror of yon Agonizing Tortures;
But that my daring Soul, shoots like a temper'd Spear,
Quite through the falling Trunk, and give it power to stand.
Now satiate thy Rage, strip off my trembling Fleesh;
And when thou'st Piece-meal torn these frailer Limbs away,
Still shalt thou leave unmov'd a naked Mind
Erect to Heaven.

Xer. Away! and drag her to her Fate! [She is carried off.
My stern Revenge will brook no more defiance.

Cleo. My Gracious Lord, might your poor Slave advise —

Xer. Preserve thou thy own Life, and tempe me not,
I tell thee Vengeance takes up all my Soul.

Cleo. But yet, you see, my Lord, she minds it not!
You are not thus reveng'd! — she mocks the Torture.

Now, Sir, may I Advise —

Xer. Advise me! What? Not ev'n the damn'd can Groan,
With more variety of Pain — Look there!

Cleo. I see, my Lord, and plainly see from this,
Were she in your Arms, she'd feel at once,

A greater Pain, and you a sweeter Vengeance.
Methinks she's lovely yet! Her Charms new pointed!

See! How her Snowy Bosom heaves and swells
With Inward Pains, Disdaining to confess 'em!

O Miracle of distressful Beauty!

Xer. Not yet a Groan! No Sigh! or Tear for Mercy!
Reveal thy Husband yet, and I forego

My Justice! — By yon Heav'n she's Dumb and dauntless!

See! How she knows her Lips, and firms her Brow,
With fullen Virtue she supports her Soul,

And bears it with unshaken Resolution! **Cleo.** Stupendious Woman!

Xer. Forbear a while — [To the Executioner.

Cleo. With half this Pain, I've seen a Malefactor
Make the Torturer tremble with his Groans!

Can all this Fortitude be born of Love?

Xer. If it be —

What Mortal Man can Merit such a Love?

If Love can make her smile in such a raging Pain?

What must he do, when wrapt in real Pleasure?

What Racks of Blissful Joy, what Raptures must she give!

By Heav'n they must be sold —

Unloose, and fear her by no means! [She is brought in all Bloody.

I'm now a Convert to her Undaunted Virtue.

Thou Glorious Woman, whose Unconquer'd Soul,

In spite of Wrongs, resolves my Rage to pity.

For ever now, thine and thy Husband's Injuries

Too little to Reward thy Constancy;
But if thy Husband's Life and Safety can,
Nay, and his Friends too, they are thine;
Thy Goodness has redeem'd 'em.

Tam. What said you, Sir? You do not flatter me! [Weeping.]

Xer. Search round my Kingdom for a Wish, 'tis thine.
Or Wealth, or Empire, all too poor a Gift,
For such exalted Virtue will not stoop to take 'em.
But ask! O speak! and teach me to be grateful!

Tam. O my cheer'd Heart! Shall I not ask in vain?

Xer. Speak, and enjoy thy Wish!

Tam. Indeed it is an humble one: I ask
Not Wealth or power, I ne're was fond of Dignity;
Nature and Reason ever taught me to believe,
No taste of Life cou'd be, but in the Free,
Th' intire Possession of the Man that lov'd me.
Give me his Life, and him the Life of those.
Unhappy Friends, his rashness has engag'd,
And I am more than happy.

Xer. All this I had resolv'd unask'd;
Can nothing more be giv'n to cheer thy Life?

Tam. A little more, If I might speak!

Xer. Speaking is to enjoy.

Tam. Then give us leave, my Husband, Sir,
Our little Infant, and my self, with the Remains
Of our Inheritance, to seek Retirement,
On some remote and unknown Clime,
Where Power and State, may never more
Disturb the Peace of our unmuting Love.

Xer. Draw up a Pardon-Strait for Artabanus,
And those with him concern'd in this Conspiracy:
Here! Fair one, take this Ring! Give it thy Husband,
Be that thy Triumph, and his Passport through the World:
Now gently raise, and bear her to the Palace,
And let our own Physicians have the care of her.

Tam. Alas, my Lord, I want no Art, such words as these
Wo'd heal a Wretch expiring of his Wounds:
O let me kiss your Sacred Feet,

And thank you with my grateful Tears of Joy;
Thus let me weep, and wash your cruel Guilt away,
Till Gods and Men, stand wondering at your Virtue!

Xer. Rise, Fair Creature! Live, and enjoy the Man that loves thee!

Tam. Now you indeed have rais'd me, rais'd me, Sir,
From Death to Life, to Love, and to my Husband;
But halt! O lead me to him, e're my Wounds are cold,
That I may fold his Body in these Bleeding Arms,
And print it o're with Crimson Characters
Of Eternal Faith!

And now let base Detraction blush
To call us Cowards, or Inconstant Souls,
Since ev'ry Drop that falls from me
May to our injur'd Sex's Glory prove,
That Racks nor Hell could shake a Woman's Love. [Exit]

Xer. Then thou'rt the first that never could be won,
And therefore only fit to feed a Love
Luxurious as my own: Now follow her!
Seize her Husband the Moment she discovers him,
And bear him to the Scaffold.

Cleo. You gave your Royal Word to spare him, Sir.

Xer. No, Fob! I gave my Word to find him out!
Justice demanded him, and since the Rake
Produc'd him not, I might with Justice then
Make use of Policy; and now I'm both
Secure of my Revenge and Love.

Cleo. Then the must not die, Sir!

Xer. Oh! no! she lives, and shall be lov'd to Ruin! I
I've prov'd her Virtue now, and find

It worthy of a Siege: I'll further try

If all the moving Penitence of Love can take her:

If (as I would) she still resist that Power,

The noblest Way to conquer is to storm.

'Tis Opposition gives the Victor Glory!

Oh! what a noble Gust will swell my Soul

When she lies drown'd in Tears, and trembling in my Grasp!

Nay, after my abhor'd Possession I'll hold her down

With smiling Spite, and talk my Raptures o'er

In her unwilling Ears I'll pour such Tales

Of Loose Desire, her very Soul shall feel the Rape.

And though——

Her Words may beg I wou'd her Life destroy,

I'll make her Eyes confess that she partakes the Joy. [Exit]

A C T IV.

The Scene, the Palace.

Enter Xerxes attended, a Messenger offering him a Letter.

Xer. **W**Ait on me to-morrow!
I'm not at leisure now for Business.

Mess. To-morrow, Sir, may be too late;

They're of Importance, and concern

The Safety of your Royal Person.

Xer. I tell thee, Slave, my Will's my Safety;
When Danger dares to face me,
I'll command it from my Person.

Mess. But, Sir—

Xer. No more! My Pleasures wait!

Enter Cleontes.

Now, my *Cleontes*; What News from Love?
How does *Tamira* bear her heavy Change of Fortune?

Cleo. Oh! never, never did the weeping Eyes
Of Pity view a Scene so mournful. When first
We seiz'd, and forc'd her Husband from her Arms,
She wrung her Hands, and shriek'd, and tore her flowing Hair!
Beating her Breasts; and in her wild Despair
She broke through all the Guards, with an amazing Force;
And strain'd her Arms once more around him.
We strove to part him from her Hold; but she
Still clung, and clasp'd with such Convulsive Force,
That from her half-heal'd Wounds the starting Blood

Agen sprung forth—
And sprinkl'd those with Pity that oppos'd her.
Mov'd by that Sight, we stop'd a while,
To let her take a short, a last Farewell.
Quite Breathless now, her Head upon his Bosom lean'd;
She wept, and spoke with dying Eyes
The tender Anguish of her Soul.
He press'd her close, and call'd, *My Life*;
She sigh'd and groan'd, and offer'd an Embrace;
But there, alas! her wasted Spirits sunk,
And left her on the Floor, expiring.

Xer. Extravagance of Love!
If only to behold her parted from a Husband's Arms
Were such a mournful Sight,
Oh! what a Beauteous Ruin will her Sorrows make
When rifl'd of her dearer Honour!

She weeps and waits; with swoll'n Eyes looks up to Heav'n;
And chides the Neuter-Gods for their Neglect of Innocence!
But say! How have you dispos'd her Husband?

Cleo. While she lay fainting on the Ground
We hurry'd him to Prison, then us'd all our Care
To bring her back to Life.

Xer. Is she then recover'd?

Cleo. To Life she is, but hardly to her Senses.
She speaks to none, nor minds another's Speech;
Pensive she sits, with folded Arms,
Fixing to th' Earth her Blood-shot Eyes, and looks
The piteous Image of true Mourning Misery.

Xer. How are her Wounds?

Cleo. By virtue of an *Arabian Plant*, she has
Already lost the Pain: They were at first

Xer. Use all the Power of Art to cheer her Spirits.

But keep her still within the Palace.

When you perceive she is inclin'd to talk,

Let me hear of her——

Mess. I beg your Majesty——

Xer. Agen this Plague! Whence are these Letters?

Mess. From my Master, Sir, the Governor of your New-erected Fort.

Xer. (*Reads.*) Ha! He tells me here some Rebels are in Arms,

—That you are able to inform me farther!

Say! Who, what are they?

Mess. Most of 'em are those the *Grecians* left unslaughter'd.

Xer. In Arms!

Mess. Yes, Sir, and in Order too; They have been

Long us'd to War: You taught 'em first the Trade,

And now they say, they'll set up for themselves.

Xer. So blunt?

Mess. They talk but little, Sir; they look their Thoughts,
And threaten in their Silence.

Xer. Aranches at the Head of 'em?

Mess. I saw, and spoke with him.

Xer. What said the Traitor?

Mess. He bid me tell you, Sir, Unless the General

Were free to-morrow, he'd himself find Hands

To force the Prison-Gates.

Xer. So Resolute? What was their Number?

Mess. When first I view'd 'em they appear'd
Not above Ten Thousand: But in Four Hours
I perceiv'd 'em doubl'd.

Xer. Ha! It may be dangerous then too far

To incense a gathering Power:— It must be so!

Here, take the Royal Signet; haste, and stop

The Execution of *Artabanus*.

[*Exit an Attendant.*]

Nor is it Fear that makes me do it;

But, on my second Thoughts, it may advance

The glorious Project of my loose Desire?

(For she'll believe, when I protest it so,

That Love of her has made me pitiful.)

[*Aside.*]

Beside, the News will call her Spirits home,

And make her fit so much the sooner for my Arms.

Post to thy Master, back: Bid him draw out

Those Forces under his Command, and meet the Rebels!

Mess. The Rebels, Sir, are more than thrice his Number.

Xer. No more! But let him do, or die!

Mess. I am gone, Sir. And if he takes my Counsel,
His few shall make their Number greater.

[*Aside.*]

Xer. I'll think no more, nor shock my Ease,

To entertain a Thought of Tossing Arms!

But yet, I am not safe till these are quell'd——

Let Hood-wink'd Fortune use her Senile's Will!

Man sees in vain, and does in vain oppose her:

Fight, or neglect 'em, still my Fate's decreed.

Nor is't in me to shun a future Ill
Unless, with Pow'r to act, Heav'n gives me Will
Yet thus to live in Doubt a Torment is
Then Magick Art shall set my Mind at Peace:
I'll to the *Magi's* Cave, whose Charms shall prove
What Fate's design'd my Empire, and my Love.

The SCENE changes to the Magician's Cave.

Re-enter Xerxes alone.

Xer. Come forth, ye Pow'rs on Futurity:
You, that with Pow'rful Charms unlock
The Cabinets of Heav'n, and steal from thence
The hidden Fates of Kings and Empires,
Haste from your gloomy Cell, and summon all
Your Art to wait a Monarch's Pleasure.

The Magi appear.

Mag. Command us, and our Art obeys.

Xer. Tell me what End my Empire is decreed,
If I by Foes, or Foes by me shall bleed.
Tell me what Pleasure I in Love shall know;
If Love, or Force, shall make the Fair One bow.
Exert your Art, and prove what Spells can do.

Mag. Prepare the Charm: The Charm must be
To *Sophiel*, who delights in Harmony.

1st Mag. sings.

*Sophiel! Old Sire of Early Fate,
Who seest before the Gods debate;
That know'st of yet Unbeing Things,
The Fates of Uncreated Kings,
Of Mex, of Empires, and the Doom
Of Thousand Thousand Years to come.*

1st Mag. Appear! 2d. Appear! 3d. Appear!

1st Mag. Sophiel!

*By the Moon's pale Beam,
That faintly glimmers o'er the Stygian Stream;*

Appear, &c.

2d Mag. Sophiel!

*By the Ocean's Ebb and Flow,
Whose Hidden Cause we ne'er can know;*

Appear, &c.

3d Mag. Sophiel!

*By the Subterraneous Winds, that make
The trembling Earth and Centre shake;*

Chorus. Appear! Thrice! Thrice! Thrice! appear!

*Whether in Air thy Form does stray,
Or under Earth by Charms is bound,
Swift! swift as Lightning, dart away;
Or fierce as Thunder, tear the Ground.*

Sophiel arises in the Form of an Old Man, all in White, and speaks.

Soph. Too curious Man! Why dost thou seek to know
Events, which, good or ill, fore-known, are Woe?
Th' All-seeing Pow'r, that made the Mortal, gave
Thee every thing a Mortal ~~Soul~~ ^{Soul} should have
Fore-Knowledge only is enjoy'd by Heav'n,
And, for his Peace of Mind to Man forbidden.
Wretched were Life, if he fore-knew his Doom;
Ev'n Joys fore-seen give pleasing Hope no Room,
And Grievs assur'd are felt before they come.
Yet loose the Charm, be wise, O send me back;
And what's decreed by Fate, with Patience take.
Mar. Thou beg'st in vain to cross our Monarch's Will;
What he commands, Spirit, I charge thee Fell,
Speak, or I'll bind thee in an Everlasting Spell.

Soph. O! spare me, and I speak; nor blame my Care:
I thought, in Kindness, I might say, *Be ware.*
Know then, rash Man, thou'st lost the happy Hour
Which fav'ring Fate once gave within thy Pow'r.
While thus thou liv'st in Thoughtless Luxury,
Slighted of Friends, of Foes despis'd, thou'lt die;
In Madness only fam'd to late Posterity.
But thou in Love a stranger Fate shalt know;
The Fair One shall, but shall to Vertue bow,
With humble Love pursue, and thou shalt find
Thou art deceiv'd, Alas! in Woman-kind.

Xer. Spirit, thou ly'st; I ne'er despis'd shall die:
I'll change my Death, to prove that Fate can lye.
Shou'd Fortune threaten what thy Words declare,
I'd free my Soul, to be reveng'd on her.
And for my Love, I will the Raptures know;
She shall to Love or Force, not Vertue, bow.
Vertue may please, and give dull Souls a Feast;
But Ravishment's a Joy for Gods to taste.

The SCENE changes to a private Room in the Palace.

Enter Cleontes and an Officer, and Servants setting out a Banquet.

Cleo. Dispatch, dispatch! the King approaches.

Off. I guess the meaning of this Preparation!
But is the Lady in a Condition, think you,
To be entertain'd?

Cleo. Her Husband's Liberty and Pardon have re-call'd her Spirits.

Off. Has she seen him then?

Cleo. She has: I saw there first Meeting here, in this Palace.

Off. Sure 'twas a joyful one.

Cleo. It was, indeed! Joyful, even to a Face of Sorrow—
So movingly she wept her Grief away;
'Twere hard to judge which seem'd the greater Pain,
The Terror of his Death, or the distracting Joy
Of his Return to Life: For ev'n there she fainted.

Off. Where is her Husband now?

Cleo. After the Hurry of their Joy was over,
He beg'd her Leave to visit brave *Mardonius*;
She, loth to part, but more unwilling to deny,
Dismiss'd him on his Promise of a quick Return.
That Visit was the only thing cou'd part 'em,
And now the King's secure of Opportunity:
If in the Interim her Husband should return,
Your Orders are, to give him no Admittance.
See all the Anti-Chambers clear'd! Away! she's here! *[Exit.]*

Enter Tamira alone.

Tam. How tedious are the absent Hours of Love!
Life's an unpleasing Dream when he's not with me;
'Tis worse! 'tis Death, and wishing to be born agen!
I am impatient of my State— When, when, my Love!
Sure Time stands still, to fly the faster at our Meeting!
Our Hours in Love have Wings; in Absence, Crutches:
What can this Musick mean?— Address'd to me? *[Soft Admick.]*
Good Heav'n! the King! and yet I read no Terror
In his Looks!— Innocence should never know *[Enter Xerxes, bow-
ing at a distance.]*
The Guilt of Fear: I'm yet—
To thank him for my Husband's Life!

[To Xerxes.] When bounteous Heav'n gives a surprizing Joy,
We bend our grateful Knees to thank the Gods: *[She kneels.]*
Kings are their Images: Such Thanks as Heav'n
Accepts, (the humble All that Man can pay,)
Receive, O sacred Prince, from me; who, like a God,
Have giv'n me Life restor'd, and more than Life, my Husband!
Nor wou'd I have you think that any Power on Earth
But a resistless Love, cou'd e'er have forc'd
My honest Heart to brave my Prince's Anger!

Xer. Ay! there, indeed, thou'st nam'd a Motive
That might excuse the foulest Crime,
And wash it fair as Innocence!
Unconquerable Love! Oh, who can brave his Power?
A Power! that braves the eldest Law of Nature:
Ev'n Self-defence is lost, where he exerts his Sway:
For, who'd not rather die in Proof of Love,
Than suffer Life, untasting of his Joys?
When *Jove* created Love!
He made a greater God than *Jove*!
Hadst thou d. sign'd the Ruine of my Empire
At Love's Command, 'twere Treason not to obey!

him alone our Hells or Heav'n we prove :
 bids the Damn'd despair — the Happy love !

Tam. Defend me, Heav'n ! Whicher wou'd he drive ! [Aside.]

Xer. Riches, Ambition, Glory, Pride, may boast
 Their several Charms to raise our Souls aloft ;
 Yet from the Height of all their towring Thoughts,
 When on the eager Stretch to kiss the Skies,
 Thus do we see 'em lur'd to Earth, like me,
 And rest their weary'd Wings upon the Hand of Love ! [takes her Hand.]
 Why dost thou turn away ? Is it such Pain
 To be below'd ! to be ador'd ! [Kneels.]

Can Penitence and humble Tears offend thee ?
 The Gods are not averse to those. We kneel
 To Heav'n, and taste of Mercy !
 O why ! why ! didst thou take an Angel's Form,
 Without the Softness of an Angel's Mind ?
 Canst thou not pity me ?

Tam. Alas ! it is not in my power :
 Still as my Thoughts grow soft, my Husband steals 'em from me !
 And he's so greedy of the Joy, he strips my Soul,
 And leaves me cruel to the World beside.

Xer. Be cruel still, yet will I still love on : I have
 Consider'd all the vain Possibles of Despair,
 Yet have resolv'd to use no other Help but Love !
 But such a Love ! fed with so soft a Flame !
 So fond of Misery ! so impotent of Hope !
 It must be inoffensive to the chastest Ears !

Tam. Why do you hold me like a frightened Dove,
 That trembles in your Hand, and murmurs for its Mate ?
 'Tis most Inhumane to be cruel 'cause you may.
 'Tis true, I am your Slave, and in your Power.

Xer. Behold, I throw it off ! Be free : I scorn
 All Power but humble Passion,
 Which thus disrobes the Purple King,
 And strips him to the starving Lover.
 — But shall I, must I starve before so fair a Banquet ?

Tam. I have no Room
 To entertain another Guest. You may
 Disturb my Love ; but never can be welcome to't.

Xer. I'll bring with me a tender sighing Heart ;
 A Lover's Heart, that bleeds, that languishes,
 And dies, to make me welcome.

Tam. Give it to those that starve ; on me 'tis lost ;
 I, in a faithful Husband, have Eternal Plenty.

Xer. Husband's the grossest Food of Love ;
 The Ignorant and Vulgar have their Share of him :
 The poor contented Drudge of idle Nature ;
 Cheated of Bliss, to be the Tool of Propagation.

But didst thou know the Joys a Lover brings;
Thus wouldst thou clasp me in thy willing Arms;
And, mad with wild Desire, confess
Thou hast been fed, but never knew it so taste before.

Tam. Strike! strike me deaf, ye Gods! O Violence!
To the Ears of Vertue!

Xer. Vertue's the Bane of Bliss, and while it checks
The Husband's Love, Love leaves the Lover free.
The Miser Husband starves a generous Flame;
He thinks you lavish, when you most are kind;
And even fears to ask——

What with a Loose the happy Lover takes,
He's still impatient of unknown Delight;
Begs with unsated Longings to improve the Bliss,
And adds, by asking, to the Store of Love.
By Heav'n, she must be mine! my Soul's on fire!
And while I grasp her thus, she must dissolve, or burn!
She melts! she pants! her Conscious Eyes confess the Joy,
And sparkle from her Flames within!
The God of Love lays prostrate all her Charms,
And thus I seize her, yielding to my Arms. *[Eagerly embracing her.]*

Tam. Tyrant! 'tis false! neither melt, or burn:
Exerting thus the Strength of Innocence,
I dash thee from thy Lustful Hopes for ever! *[Breaking from him.]*
Stand off! approach me not! for if thou dost
By all the Wrongs of my undaunted Love,
These Hands, resolv'd with horrid Force,
Shall tear my guilty Eyes away, and dash
The reeking Balls upon the Ground before thee.

Xer. Why then the Spirit fly'd
That said, I was deceiv'd in Woman-kind
I knew my Hopes to conquer thee were vain;
I now despair, and that secures my Pleasure!
Women that yield to Love, or vile Reward,
Are Things below the Passion of a Monarch's Soul:
But she that can, like thee, be deaf to Power,
To conquering Love, yet bear the Rack for Love,
She is, indeed, a Banquet for the Gods!
I'll be their Taster now——

And serve up in Ravishment to them.
Hast thou submitted to my eager Love,
Perhaps in Heat of Blood I had enjoy'd thee,
And after left thee like a common Thing,
Despis'd and hated for thy ease giving.

Tam. O happy Thought! he reaches me to 'scape him!
Forgive me, Love, if now I seem the Thing
That Love should most abhor. *[Aside.]*

Now, where's that Hand will turn those Beaming Eyes?
 Strive not! nor think thy Cries can move yet do I
 Resist me still! still Curse my hated Flame!
 'Twill burn the fiercer when oppos'd
 Methinks thou art not cold, as I could wish.
 By Heav'n, I'll grind thy sudden Hate to Love,
 And glut my Vengeance with abhor'd Possession.

Tam. And why Abhor'd? *(Smiling)*
 Can there be Horror in so sweet a Pleasure?
 Can Force be needful to the yielding Fair?
 I find, you think me, what I seem'd, all Ice!
 Ah! little! little do you know of Womankind!
 Our Lives! Our Thoughts! Our very Souls are Love.
 Our Tears are Softness, and our Coyness Fear;
 Our Frowns Affected, and our Smiles decoying;
 Our Hearts are Tender, and our Tongues belye 'em;
 Our Wishes secret, and our Eyes betray 'em:
 We must be Cruel, e're we can be kind;
 And use Resistance to be more Desir'd.
 But when our Cruelty has done its Part,
 And kindly prov'd how ill the Wretch can bear,
 Then! Then! Our Joy's secure—A look can cure Dispair!

Xer. Amazement!

Tam. You thought perhaps, because I bore the Rack,
 That I could only bear an Husband's Love?
 Alas! I suffer'd that in spite to you,
 Not love to him: For you were then my Foe!
 My Interest Bribe'd me there to suffer:
 My stolen Pleasures now are all secure,
 The Rack has fix'd my Reputation fair,
 It now shines out with such a glaring Light,
 It blinds the Eyes of Jealousy.

By Heav'n I know, were you unkind, or base,
 And should divulge the Joys, I now resolve to give,
 (So fair my Honour stands) it wou'd not be believ'd.

Xer. Nay, then the Spirit did not lye: For I
 Confess, I'm now deceiv'd in Womankind.

Tam. And why deceiv'd?
 Cou'd you believe these Eyes, the Stars of Love
 Were fixt? Nor Planets wandring round the World
 To search and tast of sweet Variety?
 A Husband's Love! perish the stupid Wretch,
 Whose Heart once fir'd, seeks not to burn for ever,
 And has an Husband's Fuel to Maintain the Flame?
 I ne'er could find it so. For me! I own
 An Hundred Eager Lovers have supply'd his room,
 Youth's form'd to melt, and Charm a Womans Heart,
 While he abroad has fought his Country's Cause,
 I've still been raising Love Recruits at home.

Xer. By all my Hopes, I am surpris'd!

Tam. But all the Conquests, that my Arts have won,
Are Poor and Low, compar'd to you: To make
The Monarch of the World Despair, and Weep!
Is something sure beyond the Power of Love:
It Prides my Soul, to think my Frowns have force,
And charms me now, to dress my Heart in Smiles.

Xer. Thy Frowns were Smiles to me: Thy Smiles are common:
A Monarch cannot Feed, on what has pall'd his Slaves.

Tam. You seem uneasy, Sir, permit me touch your Hand,
To taste your Kisses! Now you're grown so cold.

Xer. Gods! That a Strumpet cou'd appear so Chast!
Why did I form such monstrous hopes, to taste
A Woman's Virtue— 'Tis Notion all!
Lewdness and Life, are what they take together:

Tam. And why! Is that a Name to Fright you?
Why did you woo, unless to win my Love?
How cou'd I yield, unless I turn'd a wanton?

Xer. But thou'rt so Foul, I loath thee:
With looser Beauties to delight my Blood;
Such as will sell their Honour for a Price,
I'm hourly serv'd, and pall'd! 'Tis Vulgar! No!
My Hope was here—

To taste thy Beauty, and thy Virtue too:
But know, that Royal Appetite's above
The Handled Offals of a Common Love;
Thy Virtue Tainted, thou hast lost thy Charms;
I now condemn thee to thy Husband's Arms:
But since thy Lust my Furious Love has ram'd,
As a Reward, take all my Guards inflam'd:
Or if they fail to flake thy loose desire,
So I am free, set all the World on fire.

Tam. Gods! can it be? Is then the Face of Vice,
So loathsome ev'n to the Vicious?
Triumph you Guardian Powers of Virtue!
And let your Cate of Innocence this Day,
To your Eternal Glory be Recorded,
For this Escape shall tell the World a Tale,
To make your Precepts more ador'd, than ever.
The looser Beauties now shall blush to hear,
In what disgrace their lewd Embraces are.
A Tyrant Lustful, and Debauch'd with Power;
In search of Bliss, an Humble Passion wore,
Conceal'd his Lust, his slighted Crown threw by,
And only hop'd from Loves Authority:
But when he found his subtlest Art was Vain,
Unveil'd his Soul, and shew'd the Brute again.

[Exit Xer.]

The Trembling Nymph Inſpir'd, *For ſince ſhe*
 To looſe Deſire, ſafe in that ſoul Diſguiſe,
 She Palls his Flame, he ſtarts, and ſooms her Back
 To all, that Life can give, or happy Lovers take; [*Exit. As another Door.*]

ACT V.

SCENE, The Palace.

Enter Xerxes Attended.

Xer. **T**Hrough all th' unmeasur'd Bounds of Wild Delight,
 I never yet could taſt ſubſtantial Joy,
 Or know one Pleaſure more than Common Men.
 If I indulge my Appetite, I'm cloy'd;
 Uneaſy now, with what I lately long'd for:
 If when my Blood is high I taſte of Beauty,
 Flooſe the Blig, becauſe my Power Commands;
 The Peaſant there takes more delight than I
 That Travels through Diſpair to ſweet Poſſeſſion.
 When Deaf to Injuries, I make my way
 Through others Ruine,
 Stern Conſcience ſtops me ſhort; and will be heard,
 She keeps me waking, when the World's at Reſt;
 And ſtuffs my Pillow with a thouſand Thornes! [*A ſhout at a diſtance.*]
 Ha! what mean thoſe ſhouts! they ſound of Mutiny!

Enter Cleontes baſily.

Cleo. Arm! Arm, my Lord! the City's in a Tumult;
Artaſtes having forc'd the Priſon Gates,
 Has freed *Mardonius* from the Dungeon,
 Who drags his Chains along the Crowded Streets,
 And calls 'em brave Rewards for Loyalty.

Xer. Infuſking Traytor!

Cleo. Another Party here produc'd a Rack,
 Stain'd with the Blood of fair *Tamira's* Wounds!
 Here in another place
 Three dead Virgins, whom you had lately Ravish'd,
 In ſpiteful Pomp were carried round the Streets,
 To turn the Peoples Hearts againſt you;
 And I much fear, their Fury will be fatal.

Xer. Meet they no Oppoſition?

The Magiſtrates, do they ſtand Idle?
 They're out indeed; but ſhew an Hollow hearted Power,
 Unarm'd, and unrefolv'd to quell 'em:
 'Tis ſaid that *Artaſtanus* too,

Xer. Let him, *Mardonius*, be preserv'd, by giving
Set on each Head an Hundred Talents;
Mean while, to make the Rebels our Enemies,
Have leave to Plunder every Rebel House;
Then set 'em all on Fire.

If Children, Wife or Servant there have shelter,

Let none escape, but bury all in Flames.

Allarm the Guards! Bar up the Palace Gates, and follow me.

[Exit.

The SCENE Changes to the City.

Enter Mardonius in Chains, Arantes Bearing his Sword, Magistrates
and People shouting.

Arant. Fellows in Arms, and you my Friends of Peace,
Both equally oppress'd beneath a Tyrants Yoke,
Behold our Liberty in Chains;
This Loyal Arm and Head buried in Wounds,
And watching for our Countries Peace and Honour,
Half starv'd, and Fetter'd like a common Traitor;
Unask'd, and unadvise'd of you, have we presum'd
(Presuming first, you'd not condemn the Action)
To force the Prison, and set free this Man,
Free from a Tyrants Power, but still in Chains;
If you pronounce 'em worthily put on,
Him, and his Sword to your discretion we surrender,
To arm, to execute, or free himself and you.
Is it your Will he be remanded back,
To end his Life in shameful Bonds?
Or shall he take that Sword, inur'd to Action,
And lead you forth to brave Revenge, and Liberty?

People. Arm him! Arm him! Liberty! Liberty! &c. *They give him*

Mar. If supple Words *the Sword and*

My Noble Country-men must speak my Thanks: *unbind him.*

I shall appear ungrateful for this Trust Repos'd

If Blows have Eloquence, I'll be a Talker:

Let it suffice, that I am free and Arm'd.

Not my own Wrongs; but yours shall edge my Sword,

Your Liberties Infring'd, your Rights destroy'd,

Your antient Glory sunk in Sloth and Tyranny;

Your Ranfack'd Houses, and exhausted Treasure,

Your Tender Virgins, and your Wives deflower'd,

The publick Wrongs, and poor *Tamira's* Rack,

Are Stings too venom'd, not to swell Resentment,

Ev'n to your Wishes Height! Once more, I'm Yours;

Let Heav'n but smile, tho' *Persia's* Head lye low,

I've yet an Arm to ward the Tyrants Blow.

Omnes. Liberty, &c.

Exeunt.

Enter an Officer, and Four Soldiers of Artabanus's Party.

Off. Here Gentlemen, Place your Selves at the Corner of this Street, While I go privately to the House; If we can bring his Lady safely to him, He'll not be wanting to Reward our Care. Hark! the Tumult's near us! Ha! What means yon Glaring Light? — It seems some Fire! By Heav'n! the House of *Artabanus* all in Flames! Nay, 'tis the same! I know it by the Portal! Look! Look! How the Rabble scramble for the Plunder? What thankless Care they take to save — The Plate and Furniture! — see how some venture Burning to be Rogues, and yet would Tremble Should an Honest Cause Require —

[*Rabble within.*] Away with her, *Off.*

1st. Sold. And see the Torrent Roves this way.

Off. Ha! By Heav'n the Lady too! And her Child rudely Drag'd along the Streets! [*Within.*] Away with her! to the Palace! to the King! away with her!

1st. Sold. What's to be done? We are no number to oppose 'em!

Off. Let us run back to *Artabanus*, and if Possible, bring him down to her Relief, Before they carry her to the King! Run, They are upon us.

Enter Tamira Plunder'd, her Hair and Cloath in disorder; and the Rabble with her Child, she striving to recover it.

Tam. O Barbarous Cruel Men! If you are Men, be touch'd with Human Pity; If you seek Blood take mine, but spare That harmless Babel! Tear not my Heartstrings from me! You once were Young and Innocent your selves, And now perhaps have Children of your own. O! Could you bear to see 'em torn by Cruel Hands, From off their tender Mothers Breasts? Wou'd it not make you Bleed, and tear your Hair? And pierce the Heav'ns with your Shrieking Sorrows?

1. Rob. Come! I say give her the Child, it has done us No harm, and will do us no good!

2. Rob. The Child's my lawful Plunder, and I will keep it.

Tam. [*Knelling.*] Dear Sir, You look with Eyes of Mercy on me; If you have Power Command, if Pity speak him fair, So at your latest Hour, may you sweet Mercy find Of Heav'n, as now you show it me. But see! His Bloody Arm is Rais'd! O stop The Fatal Blow! O hold! For pity hold! See, Sir, I've that will charm you to Compassion; This Diamond —

[*Takes it from her Bosom.*]

2. Rab. Ay! That Diamond—
Tam. The first dear Pledge of my Unhappy Love—
To save a more Endearing One;
Weeping I bestow you: 'Tis all I th' World
Of Value I have left me:

And were I starving now for want of Food,
If this were only left to feed me, wou'd I starve,
So much beyond my Life I prize its worth!
But oh! so far beyond 'em both I love my Child!

2. Rab. Ay! now I feel thee Woman! let's see the Ring.

Tam. Here, Gentle Sir, and with it take
Ten Thousand Prayers— Sir—

2. Rab. You must have no Child, till I have such another Diamond.

Tam. By all my Woes I am a Beggar!
You cannot be so Cruel to refuse me now;
Believe me! search! take all! strip me
To pinching Cold, to every thing but shame.
Tear off this Idle Robe, it misbecomes me,
While that tender Infant needs it.

3. Rab. Pshaw! away with her! must we stand to hear
A Woman Prate?

2. Rab. Ay! Ay! away with her! Go.

Tam. My Child! O Savage Creatures!
Om. To the King, to the Palace! away with her! She falls on the Ground.

Tam. Ha! The King! Not all your force shall drag me
Thus will I Dash the Ground, and rear a Passage

To escape him! Fierce Thunder strike me to the Grave!
Gape Earth, and take me living down to Horror!

Torments! any Hell! But Life and Shame! O!

Om. Drag her! away with her! *[They drag her by the Hair.]*

Tam. O Cruel! Cruel Men! *[As they are going off.]*

Enter Mardonius, Aranthus, and their Party.

Mar. What means this strange Disorder Friends?

Why swarm you thus like angry Bees unhiv'd,

That sting in wild Revenge, or Friend, or Foe?

Is it because you want a Head to lead you?

Or do you blindly serve a Tyrant's Will?

Why is this Woman rudely drag'd along? *[They look at her, at half afraid.]*

Tam. Relieve me Heaven!

Mar. Now by my Soul! the Fair Tamina! Help her! *[They raise her.]*

Tam. Protect me, Brave Mardonius!

Mar. Protect! Yes, and Revenge thee too, Villains!

Tam. Hold! I conjure you hold— Good Sir, be mild,

And speak 'em fair, or that Revenge

May cost me dearer, than my Life—my Child!

Mar. Ha! Forego the Infant, Slaves!

Or by the lifted Fury of this Arm—

Tam. Oh! do not fight 'em, Sir! for they're merciful
And kind! they will not hurt the Babe!

Mar. Whence comes this Insolence, you Founds!
You hungry yelping Curs, that run at all
Whence Mischief cries Hallow!
Is Innocence your Game? Hence! to your Kennels Dogs!

Om. Fly! Fly! &c.

Aran. Let 'em run on, they are not worth pursuing,
Their Fear will soon disperse 'em.

Tam. But where's my Lord, my *Breakheart*, Sir!
Why is it he's not with you?

Mar. Having expected him er'e this to join us,
We sent to know th' occasion of his delay,
And every Moment wait his Answer.

Aran. And see, Sir, the Messenger is return'd!

Enter an Officer.

Mar. Now! Have you seen the General?

Off. My Lord, I found him Posted on a little Hill
Without the City;
From whence, Enrag'd, he saw his House in Flames,
And led his Men with Fury down to join you!
As he was Marching on,
An Officer (whom just before h' had sent
To find, and bring his Lady to him)
With breathless haste Inform'd him that the Rabble,
Were that very moment dragging her to the Palace;
At this he Trembl'd, and his Lips grew Pale;
But on a sudden, starting from the Fit,
He March'd his Numbers in disorder'd haste;
Strait on to th' Palace, resolving there
To force the Guards, to Dye, or Rescue her;
And this delays him, Sir.

Mar. Ill Tim'd and dangerous Error!
But hast! away again, and tell him
His *Tamira's* safe with me—— If he shou'd force
The Guards, he runs into the Jaws of Death.

Tam. O! Fly before the Danger meets him. **Ex. Officer.**

Mar. Some on before to stop the Fire!
Tamira be your Care **Aranthes,**
While I with these March on to his Assistance. **Ex. Tam. and Aran.**

Enter a Second Officer Wounded.

Off. Arm! Arm!

Mar. How now Soldier! What mean these Wounds?

Off. My Lord, they faintly speak of General's Danger.

Mar. Where is he?

Off. This Moment Storming at the Palace Gate,
I left him there demanding his *Tamira*,
And threatening if refus'd, to burn it in Ashes.

At which the King in mad Revenge grown desperate,
 Threw him about the neck of Darius with Blood,
 And dy'd, take there! There's all that's left of him!
 Of thy Tomb now, the rest of her is Gold!
 Swell'd with that Sight, he flew with Fury on the Guards,
 And now Impatient of Revenge, like Wildfire throws
 Destruction round him for a Time; or
 But must at last Expire, and let his curious Foes
 With safe Amazement view the wondrous shell that held in.
 Alas! I fear you'll be too late: But yet
 There's Hope in haste, my Lord, to stem this Flood of Ruin.

Mar. O Fatal Error! on to the Palace! March!

Exeunt.

SCENE The Palace

An Alarm is heard, several run on the Stage, and Xerxes in Disorder.

Omn. Fly! Fly! they are Entering! they are upon us: Fly! *Exeunt.*

Xer. Confusion! How the Slaves forsake me!

They've caught me in the Snare! Nor can I 'scape 'em now:

Let 'em go all! I'll stand the shock alone!

The fearful Stag at Bay will Fight,

Will dye reveng'd upon his Hunters;

And the fierce Lyon's wilder in the Toil:

Shall Danger shake a Monarch's Soul?

Now by my Crown's Right Royal Majesty

I will not fall! What Ho! my Beaver Slaves!

I'll put the Godhead on, and Destiny

Shall tear her Idle Scrolls of Fate decreed;

For she has written false of me! I will not dye,

Nor shall my Foes have power to Face me!

Thus with this Awful Front,

I'll look the Raging God within,

And frown 'em into Fear! — Thou Pale fac'd Slave!

[Shout & Clapping.]

Enter a Soldier.

Sol. My Lord, Your Guards are half destroy'd,

The rest Revolted all to Artabanus,

Who like a Deluge, with his Force comes Rowling in.

Xer. Let him Rowl on!

He meets a Rock will stand unmov'd his Roar;

And dash him into Dew.

[Shout again.]

Enter Artabanus, Pressing back his Followers.

Art. On pain of Death let no Man follow me!

Xer. How darest thou Slave!

With that Rebellious Face Confront thy King,

Or Tempt the Vengeance of a waking Deity?

Art. When Kings are Cast in Molds Divine,

We find their Actions Great and Pitiful:

It's the Noblest Composition of a God.

But thou hast none! No soft Compassion ever touch'd thee.
 Tygers and Wolves, to thee, are tame! See here,
 The rufal Flag proclaims thee worse than Tyrant:
 Or if a nearer Name can reach thee—Devil!

Xer. Traytor—

Art. From any Mouth but thine, wou'd smack my Soul!

On if I am a Traytor

Ev'n those just Powers that gave me Virtue,

When they behold the Wrongs that rais'd my Arm,

Will sure allow, I was not prompt to Ill;

Not easily disloyal—My Virtue did its part:

If held, it struggled stoutly to be true;

But here's a Force would break the strongest Hold;

And turn ev'n Pity to Revenge and Rage.

If yet the Horrour of the Deed

Has left thee Temper, speak! What had the poor

Tamira done, to merit such a Death?

Why hast thou kill'd—

The tenderest Mother, and the fondest Wife?

Xer. But that I know to say, with all my Heart,

I'd spurn thee, Traytor, for this bold Demand;

Daring to ask a Reason of thy Monarch's Will!

But, as a God, to Thunder-strike thy Soul,

I tell thee, Slave, I wou'd her to a Dis-likeing,

And then she was unfit for Life:

Nor cou'd I brook to let her live for thee,

After the Stamp of Royal Love was on her.

Art. O savage! bloody Tyrant! The Horrour of his Words

Has numm'd my Senses, and drowns my weak Revenge in Tears.

Xer. Now, By my Glorious Brother in the Skies,

My Words have more than Power of common Kings;

They're something near! 'Tis Second Fate

To strike this hardy Soldier pale with Fear:

He weeps! he dies!—I've look'd him to a Ghost

Art. And art thou dead? Our Infant-Love for ever parted?

—No more of Woman now—Farewell!

Nor need I this to dry my Tears,

The Thirst of Vengeance quench in my Blood;

And drinks 'em faster than they flow—

Hear, hear me, Gods! Revenge your Heads prophan'd;

And as the Cause, the woeful Cause, is yours,

So from this Arm (your not unwilling Instrument)

Hurl swift Destruction to the Tyrant's Heart—

Xer. I laugh at all that Fate can do! Come on, rash Fool!

And if thy Life's a Pain, (as, sure, a Rebel's ought,) and

Thus Hand to Hand oppos'd, Death never took

A Nobler Form to face thee—

Art. Now, By the Sun's Refulgent Ray
I once thee worthy of my Rage;
Oh! I cou'd thank thee that thy Blood's so high
That Manly Fury in thy Eyes transports me!
It sets the Noble Front of Honour in my View,
And heightens my Revenge with Glory.

Xer. Confusion! How he rallies with my Fury
But thus I pour it all at once
And certain send thee to the Shades.

Art. And thus the Gods repay thee
Xer. Furies! and Hell! They've struck me now
But if there be Hereafter, I'll revenge it still
Rebellion from the lowest Shades shall rise,
And give 'em fresh Alarms of War,
More dreadful than their puny Giants Rage:
The desperate Fiends, by me to Freedom led,
Shall dash their Chains against their Crystal Tow'rs,
And shake their Heav'n to Horrour
My gushing Blood flows inward in my Throat
And drives out Life before it
I am not dying! No! I'm weary of the World;
And now will sleep for ever!

Art. When I behold this Sight, I wish to follow thee:
Death cannot be more terrible;
His Hand is on me, and his Looks are mild:
To be no more, is now to be most happy
Oh, for a Friendly Witness of my Glory!
My Fortune's kind, I hear 'em coming!

Enter Mardonius and his Party.
Oh! welcome Friends! My Fellow-Soldiers, welcome
See there the Wounds of Persia cur'd, the Tyrant's dead;
By me he fell, and poor Tamira is reveng'd.

Mar. Horrour on Horrour! Thy Tamira lives!
And comes with eager Love to meet thy Arms:
Oh! rather had she died, than thus to meet thee!

Art. What means my Friend? Tamira living?
Mar. Run! Haste, and tell her of this bloody Chance!
If she would see her Husband, she must fly.
Alas, my Friend! That Gory Handkercher
Was only by the Tyrant thrown to gall thee:
Thy poor Tamira lives! This Moment dragg'd along
By the rude Rabble, I redeem'd her last
But hark! A ramble brings her on! He faints here
O Cruel! Gods! can you not lend one Hour
To a departing Lover!

Art. Grieve not for me! Give to my Wife thy Team;
She'll need a Friends Compassion: Let not her Sorrows

(For I know she'll make my Will) be desperate: on grow from Toss & Fall
Her little Infant will require some Care, — do now W. —
I charge her, live for that — — — — —
Commend me to her Heart, and let her know,
My latest dying Words, and Thoughts, — — — — —
Confess her Loving, more than Life belov'd — — — — —

Mar. He's gone! O Freedom dearly bought!
Unwelcome Peace! Without the Life that gave it.
But see, his frighted Widow comes! O fearful Thought!
O piteous Woman!

Enter Arantes, with Tamara: She runs to the Body.

Tam. Where! where's my bleeding Lord? Stand off!
O give him to my Arms! Hah! — — — — —
O give him to my Arms! Hah! — — — — —
O give him to my Arms! Hah! — — — — —

Arantes. Help ho! she sinks; let's raise her from him.
Tam. Oh! we must never part,
But with more Pain than Bodies lose their Souls.
Dear Sir, for Pity's sake oppose me not!
Ev'n in your Eyes I read a Friend's Concern;
But mine's a nearer Tye! a Wife! Alas!
I was his Wife, his tender Wife belov'd.

Mar. Indeed, I pity thee: But yet, call Reason to thy Aid.

Tam. Ah! Do I not, my Lord? Are not my Tears my Duty?
Have I not Cause to tear my Flesh, to bleed,
And dash me on the Ground?
Oh! cou'd my Tears but fall like Show'ers from Heav'n,
This dismal Object, sure, wou'd drown the World.

Mar. Be comforted, fair Creature:
Nothing is ours: Nature but lends us Life.
Since Death's a Debt that all must pay — — — — —

Tam. Since he is dead, is there a Comfort left me?
Oh! I cou'd out-weep the Southern Clouds! Away,
And give my Sorrows Room: Stand off!
And let me fill my Arms with Woe.
Grudge me not this! This Ease of Misery finding
Let me but talk a while, and grieve, and sigh
His cold, unfeeling Lips, and you shall see me quieter
Hush'd as the Cradle-Babe,
When chidden by its angry Parent to a slumber.

Arant. Give her her Way, my Lord!
Her Grief swells higher when oppos'd.

Mar. By Heav'n, this stubborn Heart, that has, unmov'd,
Walk'd by a Heap of groaning Poes,
At this sad Sight is melted down to Woman.

Tam. Hush! — — — — — Who's that, weeps so loud! — — — — —
He is not well, — — — — — he slumbers, and a cold,
Damp-Sweat is on his Brow! O my poor Love!
Hark! hark! He calls me in his Sleep! He chides,
Says I am unkind, and goes to follow him!

As if the Terror were not in his Hand, I know the little Instant will require me to live for that
What means this Friendly Weapon at my Hand?
It looks not, sure, as if the Hand of Chance
But Love, had laid it, to relieve my Woe!
— 'Tis so! — 'Twas Love: —

Arrah. O fatal Deed! I judged my Freedom dearly bought
Mar. O rash Despair! I gave it, that I gave it
Tam. Call it not rash, when there's such Fate in Death
But Death, alas! is never wholly kind,
For tho' I'm pleas'd to think I had not Power

T'out-live my Lord, yet, Oh! it grieves my Heart
That I have robb'd an Infant of its Mother
Oh! be a Friend to that; and reach him, Sir,
To keep the Middle-Paths of Active Life,
When wild Ambition, or too powerful Love

With eager Heat would drive him blindly on;
Be kind, and warn him with his Parents' Hymn
Mar. There broke

The tenderest Heart that ever sigh'd in Love;
But Love was her Undoing; for once,
In wild Revenge, to right her Love-Horror'd
She struck a Ponyard to the Villain's Heart
The Gods have frown'd; but Men must ply her

Nay, Heav'n but half-rejects her Fault, gives her
A kind, a not untimely Death
Too late to live, when all the love was gone
Remove the Bodies; never more to part;
Living, one chaste Bed; now one Grave shall hold em

But here; the Gods with Terror strike Mankind
Let Kings and jarring Subjects hence be warn'd
Not to oppress, or drive Revenge too far;
Kings are but Men, and Men by Nature
Subjects are Men, and cannot always be Kings
Much shou'd be born before Revenge is sought;
Ever Revenge on Kings is dearly bought

Yet, to our Woes, the Gods this Comfort give;
From those that die, the Living learn to live

The END